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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

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The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Coordination, programme and other questions: ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, including 61/16

Economic and environmental questions

Social and human rights questions

Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16

Report of the Secretary-General

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Summary

The Economic and Social Council continues to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences. The annual ministerial review takes an in-depth look at a chosen cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. The results of the various conference follow-up processes are brought together in an integrated manner at the review. A focused effort through the annual ministerial review process would be the most effective way for the Council to review substantively the progress made in the integrated conference follow-up.

Several procedural improvements in the follow-up of conferences have facilitated the progress in advancing an integrated approach in the substantive work of Council machinery. The Council and its subsidiary bodies have increased their interaction among them. The functional commissions have completed examining their methods of work. The adoption of multi-year programme of work for the annual ministerial review will further facilitate the engagement by the Council system.

Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued by the annual ministerial review process and the procedural improvements of the follow-up processes have been completed for the time being, the annual report on the integrated follow-up may add little value going forward. The Council may wish to triennialize the report to provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up. The General Assembly could continue its substantive review of the integrated follow-up based on the comprehensive annual report of the Economic and Social Council.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. The broad-based framework laid the groundwork for the Millennium Summit, at which a series of time-bound goals and targets were adopted as the Millennium Development Goals. Five years later when world leaders returned to assess progress, they recognized that the achievement of many of the internationally agreed development goals was off track in a number of countries, and that vigorous implementation was needed without delay.

2. To close the implementation gap, world leaders pledged to develop and to implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve their national development priorities as well as the internationally agreed development goals. Member States committed themselves at the highest level to use the Millennium Development Goals and the goals and strategies agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits as the foundation of their national development strategies.

3. Since 1995, the Economic and Social Council has promoted an integrated and coordinated follow-up aimed at enhancing coherence among the various conference follow-up processes. The individual conference follow-up mechanisms and processes undertaken by various functional commissions together contribute to the whole spectrum of the United Nations development agenda, while maintaining their distinctiveness.

4. Several efforts have been made in order to strengthen the follow-up mechanism. Most recently, the annual ministerial review, launched in 2007 pursuant to the 2005 World Summit Outcome and General Assembly resolution 61/16, provides a central forum for all stakeholders to assess progress in overall implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to examine the results that have been achieved in implementing the United Nations development agenda. It conducts a substantive review, focusing on cross-sectoral themes common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, as envisaged by General Assembly resolutions 57/270 B and 61/16.

5. To complement the annual ministerial review, section II of the present report highlights the progress made on the conference follow-up as it relates to the theme of the 2008 annual ministerial review, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", and the main policy issues discussed by the functional commissions. Section III of the report addresses the institutional aspects of the follow-up processes and how to promote policy coherence and strengthen the link between policy and operations.

II. Overview of assessments of progress emanating from conference review processes

6. The global conference follow-up mechanisms have framed their work around the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and have adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing the follow-up to their individual conferences, recognizing that the different goals and

targets agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits can be achieved only if they are pursued together. The functional commissions have been instrumental in maintaining focus on the implementation of the outcomes of different conferences within their respective purviews. The United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes also actively contribute to the annual ministerial review process through their participation in and organization of meetings, special events, and so on, and through the inputs they provide to the report of the Secretary-General. They also contribute to the relevant functional commissions, with focus on the implementation of conference outcomes.

A. Global perspective: assessments of progress by functional commissions

7. Although the adoption of the theme for the 2008 annual ministerial review came after most commissions had established their multi-year work programme, commissions made contributions to the theme in various ways on specific aspects of sustainable development, such as the impact of climate change to environmental statistics and indicators, urbanization, agriculture and rural development.

8. Against the backdrop of the current global food crisis, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its sixteenth session, in May 2008, emphasized the need for ramping up investment in research and development in innovative and sustainable agricultural technologies and infrastructure in developing countries. The food crisis has highlighted the consequences for food security of neglecting agriculture and the urgency of redressing that situation. An integrated response was needed to address the multiple factors which contributed to the crisis. The long-term challenges include: trends in agricultural production, consumption and prices; the impacts of climate change and high energy prices; and new factors such as demand for biofuels. It was also recognized that the review of agriculture cannot be de-linked from the other components of the thematic cluster of the session, namely rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. The session provided a foundation for discussions on the global food crises, in the Economic and Social Council on 20 May, and at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008.

9. Climate change was highlighted by many as having important implications for all the issues in this cluster, with particular challenges facing Africa and small island developing States. Pursuing sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, was essential to progress in that important area.

10. Public-private partnerships, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development partnerships, have proven important in enhancing sustainable development, including through promoting multi-stakeholder involvement, resource mobilization and facilitation of technology transfer and diffusion. The private sector can play an important role in increasing agricultural production and promoting rural development.

11. Enhancement of capacity-building was of paramount importance, particularly in rural and remote areas. Lack of knowledge, appropriate legislation and institutional infrastructure, and weakness in education systems and human resources development continue to affect adversely the ongoing efforts for promoting

agricultural productivity, rural development and for combating desertification and land degradation.

12. Gender was a prominent cross-cutting issue for the current cycle of the Commission. The primary role of women in agriculture, notably in Africa, needs to be recognized and measures devised to enhance further their productivity, addressing the specific challenges that they may face in gaining access to land, credit and the legal system.

13. Addressing the means of implementation, including meeting commitments to financing for development, trade, technology transfer, scientific knowledge, education, and capacity-building, will be critical to ensuring progress. Greater policy coherence and coherence of donor support are required with regard to agriculture and the other issues under consideration. Progress in addressing the challenges identified by the Commission at its sixteenth session will require strengthened international cooperation, strong political commitment from Governments, and active engagement of all major groups, which the Commission is expected to consolidate at its seventeenth session.

14. The Commission on the Status of Women considered "Gender perspectives on climate change" as the emerging issue for its fifty-second session, through an interactive expert panel.[1] The outcome of the expert panel, in the form of a Chairperson's summary, has been forwarded as a contribution to the annual ministerial review. The Commission also transmitted a conference room paper on gender perspective and sustainable development (E/CN.6/2008/CRP.2) as input to the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Council.

15. The panel discussion highlighted the gender-specific impacts of climate change. It noted that women are among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural disasters because of their domestic responsibilities, including food security and provision of heat and water supply. Women play a vital leadership role in community revitalization and natural resource management, but they tend to be underrepresented in decision-making on sustainable development, including on climate change. To increase women's participation in climate change activities, actions are being taken to promote global and national networks that advocate for greater participation of women in the climate change negotiations and the inclusion of gender perspectives in policy formulation and evaluation. Action should also be taken to include gender mainstreaming in all mitigation and adaptation policies, including gender impact assessments and gender-responsive budgeting.

16. On forests, the adoption of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests on 17 December 2007 (General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex) was seen a historic achievement, which marked a new era in sustainable forest management and international cooperation. The instrument should also enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2009 will consider the topic "Forests in a changing environment", in particular in the context of climate change, biodiversity and desertification/deforestation.

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 7* (E/2008/27), chap. II.

17. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice discussed the need for holistic and comprehensive national multisectoral approaches to preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources, as well as for international coordination and cooperation in support of such approaches, including through technical assistance activities to build the capacity of relevant national officials and institutions.

18. On climate change, the Statistical Commission decided to develop an agenda for action by the statistical community. On development indicators, the Commission commended the efforts by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators in implementing some of the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 and in including an increasing number of Member States in its deliberations.[2] It also took note of the serious concerns expressed by several Member States about the quality of the measurement of indicators, and requested submission of an updated report to the Commission at its next session. It also requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to give greater consideration to the need for improving the capacity of countries to produce the indicators and to increase efforts to further improve the indicators of all Millennium Development Goals through methodological and technical refinements.

19. At its seventh session, in 2008, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues discussed the theme "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges", focusing on the issue of climate change and research into mitigation measures being taken and how these are impacting on indigenous peoples.[3] A special focus was given to the Pacific region as an area that is already feeling the adverse impacts of climate change. The Forum urged States, the World Bank, and other multilateral and bilateral financial institutions to consider alternative systems beyond the perpetuation of highly centralized fossil-fuel-based energy supplies and large-scale bioenergy and hydropower dams. The Forum called for an increase in support for renewable, low-carbon and decentralized systems, taking into account the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams. The Forum stressed that indigenous peoples must have a say in decision-making processes on how to combat global climate change. The Forum also made a number of recommendations on the Millennium Development Goals and human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, among other issues.

20. The functional commissions also pursued follow-up of conferences according to their multi-year work programmes, encompassing the various aspects of the United Nations development agenda including: employment, ageing, gender and finance, post-conflict peacebuilding, violence against women, alternative development and the information society.

21. Full and productive employment has been recognized as a global priority following the World Summit for Social Development, which placed the goal of full and productive employment at the centre of the United Nations development agenda. Governments committed to promoting full employment as a basic priority of their economic and social policies. Since the 2005 World Summit, full

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[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 4* (E/2008/24), chap. I.B, decision 39/114.

[3] Ibid., *Supplement No. 23* (E/2008/43), chap. I.

employment and decent work for all received renewed attention. The substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2006 and the ministerial declaration further highlighted the importance of promoting full employment and decent work.

22. In 2007, the review segment of the Commission for Social Development undertook an evaluation of progress in achieving the goals of full employment and decent work, and their impact on poverty eradication and social integration. At its forty-sixth policy session, in 2008, the Commission for Social Development focused on policies and practical measures to facilitate the implementation of the goal of full employment and decent work. It resulted in action-oriented resolution "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", which reaffirmed the commitments of the Social Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and recognized that a people-centred approach must be at the centre of economic and social development. It was stressed that full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of the sustainable development of all countries and reaffirmed that it should be made a central objective of national policies and international policies as well as national development strategies, as part of the global efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.[4]

23. Also during its forty-sixth session, the Commission for Social Development concluded the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The Commission adopted a resolution encouraging Governments to continue their efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons into their policy agendas and to strengthen efforts to develop their national capacity to address the national implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal exercise. In addition, the Commission acknowledged the essential contributions of the regional commissions to the implementation, review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, including the organization of regional review and appraisal meetings and the preparation of their outcome documents and encouraged the international community to enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to eradicate poverty.[5]

24. On financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Commission on the Status of Women, at its fifty-second session, adopted agreed conclusions[6] to be brought to the attention of the General Assembly as an input into the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008. By its agreed conclusions, the Commission emphasized the need for political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women and that funding had to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission also reaffirmed the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, which called upon Governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all policies and budgetary processes, as appropriate, in order to promote equitable, effective and appropriate resource

[4] Ibid., *Supplement No. 6* (E/2008/26), chap. I.A.

[5] Ibid., chap. I.C.

[6] Ibid., *Supplement No. 7* (A/2008/27), chap. I.A.

allocation and establish adequate budgetary allocations to support gender equality and development programmes that enhance women's empowerment.

25. On post-conflict peacebuilding, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue to evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding", adopted by the Commission at its forty-eighth session in 2004. Participants confirmed that attention to gender equality issues and women's full and effective participation in peace processes and peacebuilding was crucial in the promotion of gender equality, as well as in ensuring the sustainable and effective reconstruction of political, social, economic and legal structures in countries emerging from conflict. Despite progress made since the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), participants noted a continuing underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations and processes.

26. Regarding violence against women, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission held a joint dialogue on indicators to measure violence against women. Such indicators and the data collected to support them would increase the visibility and give a clearer picture of the scope of violence against women, and of trends within and between countries. They would significantly enhance States' capacity to put in place effective policy and other measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Participants recognized the need for capacity-building and institutional development to ensure the involvement of the national statistical offices in the collection and dissemination of statistics on violence against women. Participants emphasized the need to harmonize methodologies for the collection of data and statistics and to allocate sufficient human and financial resources.

27. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice stressed that States have an obligation to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women and girls, and must exercise due diligence in preventing and investigating violence against women and girls and in punishing the perpetrators of such violence in order to eliminate impunity and to provide protection to the victims and that failure to do so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

28. At its forty-first session, in 2008, the Commission on Population and Development adopted a resolution on national, regional and international action on the subject of population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development.[7] In that resolution, the Commission recognized that the world population was undergoing a historic and unprecedented transformation from being mostly rural to being predominantly urban, with major disparities in the level of urbanization remaining among regions and countries. The Commission considered that the rapid urbanization of the world's population required integrated and participatory approaches to spatial management, including through coordinated action between national Governments and local authorities, with the support of the international community. In that regard, the Commission urged Governments to promote linkages between urban and rural areas in recognition of their economic,

[7] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5* (E/2008/25), chap. I.B, resolution 2008/1.

social and environmental interdependence. The Commission also called upon Governments to address the challenges and opportunities of urban growth and internal migration by taking prompt, forward-looking and sustained action to ensure that those phenomena would have a positive impact on economic growth, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The Commission also called upon the international community to support the efforts of developing countries in that regard, including through building capacities to respond to those challenges and opportunities.

29. On the issue of promoting sustainability and integrality in alternative development as an important part of drug control strategy, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs emphasized that the problem of illicit production of narcotic drugs is often related to development problems, in particular poverty, health and illiteracy, and that they must be tackled in a larger development context through a holistic and integrated approach. The Commission encouraged Member States, in the context of the review of the progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets set in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, to consider developing a set of international guiding principles on alternative development, based on the sharing of best practices and lessons learned from different countries and regions.[8]

30. Implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society is being undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/252. The challenges ahead are to ensure the comprehensive exchange of views, information and experiences, promotion of policy dialogue and advocacy for the implementation of the Summit outcomes by a variety of United Nations bodies, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners, requiring the strengthening of cooperation and collaboration, and flow of information among all parties involved.

31. In response to those challenges, the Council, in its resolutions 2007/8 and 2007/29, decided that it would monitor the information exchange on the Summit outcomes in the context of its annual consideration of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, on the basis of the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and drawing upon other relevant inputs.

32. The United Nations, the intergovernmental bodies and multi-stakeholders constitute the major players on the implementation and follow-up activities of the Summit. In response to Council resolution 2007/8, entitled "Flow of information for the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society", a report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit at the regional and international levels (E/CN.16/2008/2) as submitted to the Commission. The report assessed global and regional progress in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and highlighted major initiatives including the facilitation of the exchange of views, information and experiences, building capacities and the promotion of policy dialogue and advocacy for mainstreaming information and communication technologies for development. Also, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (see A/60/687), cooperation, exchange of information and

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 8* (E/2008/28), chap. I.A, draft resolution I.

promotion, and enhancing cooperation among diverse stakeholders, are activities undertaken through a system of action-line facilitators.

B. Regional perspectives

33. The regional commissions have placed the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of their work programmes and continue to contribute to the efforts of their member States towards meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The follow-up work has taken several forms — research, policy analysis, advocacy, promoting policy dialogue, sharing best practices, developing codes and indicators and monitoring their implementation, and strengthening statistical capacities for tracking progress towards the development goals. They have helped identify regional priority areas for action and have realigned their programmes accordingly.

34. In the area of sustainable development, the regional commissions support the integration of environmental concerns into the broader development agenda at the national, subregional and regional levels in order to strengthen the interface between environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic development in national policymaking for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction. The Commissions conduct the preparation of regional assessment reports and regional implementation meetings to inform and contribute regional perspectives to processes mandated by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Interregional collaboration is also taking place. For example, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat are working together on a project to improve the availability, reliability, timeliness and comparability of environment statistics, indicators and accounts.

35. Countries in Africa have made real efforts to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into their national development plans and strategies and aligned them with the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. With support from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and other organizations, over 41 countries have started the process of preparing national development strategies aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. However, the region continues to suffer from chronic and rising poverty and at current trends, Africa as a region is not likely to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. ECA has contributed to the work of the Millennium Development Goal Africa Steering Group and its Working Group, which was established by the Secretary-General in September 2007 to mobilize resources and sustain international support for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. Furthermore, as a strategic partner to the African Peer Review Mechanism, ECA continued to participate actively in the process and contribute technical inputs to the country reviews carried out in 2007. The third assessment report on the Millennium Development Goals, jointly prepared by ECA and the African Union Commission, will be submitted to the next African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2008.

36. To assist African countries in addressing the challenge of climate change through policy research and capacity-building, an African Climate Policy Centre

will be established at ECA in partnership with The Energy and Resources Institute of India and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). ECA is also actively involved in the development of the African Union/ECA/African Development Bank joint initiative on land policy that seeks to develop and build consensus on a continental framework and guidelines for land policy in Africa.

37. For countries in the Asia-Pacific region, major gaps remain in both the formulation and implementation of the national development strategies, including limited institutional capacity to implement development strategies and lack of financial resources. Regarding sustainable development, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized a regional implementation meeting for the Commission on Sustainable Development in November 2007, in collaboration with several United Nations entities, to review the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The meeting identified the development of environmentally sustainable economic growth patterns, based on a vibrant and inclusive rural sector and the eco-efficient use of natural capital, as the overarching and unique challenge for Asia and the Pacific. At its sixty-fourth session in April 2008, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific examined the theme "Energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific".[9]

38. In Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC has been promoting the establishment of linkages between the implementation of the "leading actions" identified in the Monterrey Consensus and that of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. These follow-up actions have mainly focused on analytical work, promoting policy dialogue, capacity-building and sharing of best practices. Since 2003, ECLAC has been taking advantage of its annual Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy to hold methodological workshops on environmental expenditure and investment, aimed at promoting the use of uniform and comparable methodologies to quantify and classify public and private environmental expenditure and investment, in order to improve the quality of the information available to decision makers in designing funding strategies for environmental purposes. In addition to those efforts for integrated follow-up, the secretariat has been assisting member States with the formulation of regional consensus documents for presentation to upcoming United Nations conferences, summits and review meetings. Furthermore, ECLAC developed and maintains the inter-agency website (www.eclac.cl/cumbres) for the integrated follow-up to United Nations summits and conferences, which includes a decentralized management module to allow funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to present their contributions to the various international conferences, thus facilitating the exchange of information required for improving inter-agency coordination and enhancing system-wide coherence.

39. In the Arab region, a partnership formed since 2003 among ESCWA, UNEP and the League of Arab States follows up on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by providing regular substantive technical support to the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. ESCWA also cooperates with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Electricity in the field of energy for sustainable development. Programmes to improve energy efficiency in the various

[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 19* (E/2008/39), chap. III.

economic sectors have been implemented with reasonable success, and integration projects on electricity grids interconnection and gas distribution networks have been implemented. Policies to support such trends have been integrated in national decision-making in several counties in the region. ESCWA, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and UNEP, launched a Programme on Trade and Environment Capacity-Building in the Arab Region. In the area of sustainable water resources management, all ESCWA member countries are currently reviewing their national water strategies within the Integrated Water Resources Management framework, but very few countries have completed those strategies and integrated them into social and economic development frameworks.

40. In Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has been implementing a major reform, including the promotion of an intersectoral and cross-sectoral approach to its activities. The reform identified the Millennium Development Goals and gender as cross-sectoral issues to address within the ECE framework. The session of the Commission became biennial since 2007. At its 2009 session, the Commission will review the reform and the progress made.

III. Promoting policy coherence and strengthening the link between the global policy debate and national activities

41. The Economic and Social Council has an important role in assessing how the organizations of the United Nations system integrate the United Nations development agenda in their programmes of work and provide coherent support to the implementation of these national strategies. The present section will examine the progress made in strengthening policy coherence (the horizontal coordination) at the intergovernmental, inter-agency and country levels, and the link between policy and operational activities (the vertical coordination).

A. Promoting policy coherence at the intergovernmental level

42. Several procedural improvements in the follow-up of conferences have facilitated the progress in advancing an integrated approach in the substantive work of the Council machinery, as called for by relevant resolutions. The Council, in its resolution 2007/29, noted the completion of functional commissions' review of their working methods, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/270 B and by the Council in its resolution 2006/44.

43. Since July 2002, the Bureau of the Council and the chairpersons of the functional commissions have met annually to exchange views on how the subsidiary machinery of the Council might enhance its contribution to the Council's role as the principal body in overseeing the overall implementation of the internationally agreed development goals. In 2007, such a meeting was held for the first time in January, given the new mandates and structure of the Council as called for in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and confirmed in General Assembly resolution 61/16. On 29 January 2008, the Bureau of the Council met with the chairpersons of the functional commissions again to consider ways in which the Council's subsidiary machinery can contribute to the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum.

44. **To ensure that the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum function effectively as a review mechanism, the Council's subsidiary and related bodies should provide analyses and policy inputs that enhance the coordinated and integrated follow-up of the outcomes of the conferences and summits and help to advance national development strategy formulation, evaluate progress and promote international cooperation in pursuit of development goals.**

45. The establishment of a multi-year work programme for the annual ministerial review provides predictability in the themes of the review, which facilitates timely preparations, enables full engagement of the Council system and mobilizes expertise from Member States, the United Nations system, and other stakeholders. Standing agenda items introduced by a number of the functional commissions facilitate the preparation of the substantive inputs. **Functional and regional commissions, as well as agencies, and United Nations system entities should be encouraged to review their priorities and programmes taking into account the multi-year work programme of the annual ministerial review**. This would ensure that the support for the review becomes systematic and a priority in the work of the United Nations system.

46. Collaboration among functional commissions has been taking place to enhance policy coherence by holding joint bureau meetings and interactive expert panels, on cross-cutting issues. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women has continued its close collaboration with the Statistical Commission, through a joint high-level round-table and two joint parallel events on the development of indicators, including on violence against women. The Commission on the Status of Women has also organized meetings with other functional commissions to exchange views on key issues as well as to promote mainstreaming of gender perspectives into their work. For example, in preparation for the review processes, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women has held meetings with the Chairpersons of the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission for Social Development. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the President of the Human Rights Council has been invited to participate in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

B. Reporting on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences

47. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly may wish to reassess the value added of the annual reporting on the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. In paragraph 39 of its resolution 57/270B, the General Assembly established the agenda item to be taken up annually to consider the assessment of the implementation of the conference outcomes, and to consider the relevant chapters of the annual report of the Council. However, that arrangement was put in place before the conception and launch of the annual ministerial review.

48. The United Nations system organizations as well as the Council's subsidiary bodies together conduct a vast amount of activities contributing to conference follow-up, covering the entire development spectrum. The resolutions of the Council under this item in recent years indicate that reviewing this information in a

sweeping manner has not prompted any action-oriented directives or new substantive insights. Given the vastness of this task, a focused effort through the annual ministerial review process would be a more effective way to conduct the Council's overall responsibilities in the integrated conference follow-up. This is also consistent with the spirit of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly (resolutions 50/227, 52/12B, 57/270B and 61/16).

49. The annual ministerial review takes an in-depth look at a chosen cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The results of the various conference follow-up processes are brought together in an integrated manner at the annual ministerial review. This is, in effect, an integrated and substantive way in which the Council can review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and summits and their follow-up processes and assess its impact on the achievement of the goals and targets of the conferences and summits, as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 61/16.

50. Coordination issues of the United Nations system are addressed in the following year's coordination segment. In its resolution 57/270B, the General Assembly invites the functional commissions and relevant follow-up mechanisms to contribute from their specific perspectives to the assessment by the Council of the cross-sectoral thematic issue selected for the coordination segment of its substantive session, including through the possible participation of their chairpersons, suitably mandated, in the discussions on the cross-sectoral thematic issue in the Council. As in previous years, the Council will have such opportunity to exchange views with the chairperson at the panel discussion to be organized for that purpose.

51. Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued by the annual ministerial review process and the procedural improvements of the follow-up processes have been completed for the time being, the annual report on the integrated follow-up may add little value going forward. **The Council may wish to triennialize the report to provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up.**

52. At its sixty-fifth session, the General Assembly will review the implementation of resolution 61/16, which covers the procedural aspects of the Council's new functions. The Assembly could continue its substantive review of the integrated follow-up based on the annual comprehensive report of the Economic and Social Council.

C. Linking normative and operational work: promoting policy coherence at the inter-agency level and ensuring coordination at the country level

53. The 2005 World Summit Outcome called for strengthening of the linkages between the normative work of the United Nations and its operational activities. Linking the discussion of policy options to specific country experiences results in a more specific and hands-on debate and brings the Council closer to bridging the

divide between the normative and operational work of the United Nations. The annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forums provide key forums for advancing that objective. During the annual ministerial review's national voluntary presentations, countries present an assessment of their progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals based on detailed national reports.[10] By systematically drawing upon regional and country-level assessments, the annual ministerial review can help to bridge the gap between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system.

54. Over the past few years, the United Nations system organizations have progressively strengthened their support to the integrated conference follow-up at the country level. Their effectiveness in promoting a more coordinated United Nations country team response to national priorities has increased through a number of tools such as the common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the results matrix, thematic groups and joint programmes. The "One United Nations" approach demonstrates the commitment of the Organization to strengthening system-wide coherence by delivering as one entity, and to align country programmes with national priorities as reflected in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and work in a cohesive, integrated, and more effective manner, while strengthening national ownership of development efforts. Driven by the strong belief that increased system-wide coherence in the working modalities of United Nations system member organizations can contribute significantly to their ability to deliver better "programmatic" results, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) is working to harmonize business practices across the United Nations system to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of United Nations system assistance.

55. However, despite the significant improvements made in recent years, the diverse approaches and the uneven capacities available to support country-level presence and action across the system continue to limit the system's capacity to mount integrated and comprehensive responses.

56. To help promote further coherence, the Economic and Social Council could develop stronger functional linkages with operational parts of the United Nations system through inter-agency arrangements that support the annual ministerial review. With the aim of strengthening its role and functioning, CEB recently completed a review of its structure and working methods. The integration of the United Nations Development Group into the CEB framework, alongside its two standing subsidiary bodies — the High Level Committee on Management and the High Level Committee on Programmes — that resulted from this review, will help ensure that operations at the country level are aligned with the strategic directions and priorities pursued at the programme level, while at the same time providing the mechanisms to strengthen coordination at the country level and incorporating feedback from country-level cooperation into programme and management processes at Headquarters level.

57. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs continues to serve as a platform for analytical and normative activities on economic and social issues

[10] See the 2008 National Voluntary Presentations Concept Note and 2008 National Voluntary Presentations Report Outline at http.//www.un.org/ecosoc/newfund/amrnational.shtml.

within the United Nations Secretariat and to promote enhanced coordination and coherence among its members. The activities of the Executive Committee encompass a broad range of policy issues geared towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Executive Committee actively supports the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review, particularly with regard to the preparatory process and consultations at the regional level.

58. **A closer interaction between the Council and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the newly constituted CEB structure and the executive boards of funds and programmes could help ensure that the United Nations system organizations effectively support the implementation of conference commitments through their programming frameworks. The functional commissions should also continue to explore ways to engage United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes more systematically in their work. Further efforts would be needed to make effective use of the mechanisms for cooperation with financial and trade institutions, as envisaged in the 2005 World Summit and in the Monterrey Consensus.**

D. Strengthening the relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in the implementation of the development goals

59. Since 1998, the Economic and Social Council has held a special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization immediately after the Spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The origin for those meetings can be found in the context of United Nations reform measures adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, specifically in Assembly resolution 50/227. The meetings have facilitated a free-flowing dialogue among ministers of finance returning from the Washington, D.C., meetings, on the one hand, and ministers of development cooperation as well as ministers and high-level officials of foreign affairs, on the other. Civil society and private sector representatives have also participated in those meetings. The multi-stakeholder nature of the event has helped to strengthen partnerships for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

60. The 2002 Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development encouraged the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF, with the World Trade Organization, "to address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation, as a follow-up to the Conference, at the spring meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions".[11] Since then, the meeting has become a major intergovernmental focal point for follow-up to the agreements reached and commitments made at the International Conference on Financing for Development.

61. The 2008 special high-level meeting had special significance as it took place during the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for

[11] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha, from 29 November to 2 December 2008. Under the overall theme "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, including new challenges and emerging issues", the meeting provided major substantive inputs to the outcome of the Doha Review Conference.

62. As the Council now undertakes the annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forums, its dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions will need to be further strengthened. While the number of ministers participating in the meeting has decreased in recent years, participation and full engagement of an unprecedented number of Executive Directors in both the meeting itself and the preparatory process has enriched the event.

63. The civil society and private sector component could be further strengthened and geared towards promoting collaboration and partnership between companies, foundations, Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to advance United Nations goals in the follow-up to the Monterrey Conference and the 2005 World Summit.

64. **Modalities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at the intergovernmental level should be further strengthened, subject to the outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.**

E. Creating partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders

65. Over the last 15 years, there has been an unprecedented rise in the involvement of civil society and business representatives in United Nations conferences and summits. The participation of advocacy and interest groups, business and industry, research and academic institutions, and other relevant stakeholders has injected dynamism into the intergovernmental process and has strengthened engagement in the implementation of conference outcomes.

66. The innovative modalities of cooperation established for the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum have opened new opportunities to inject dynamism into the follow-up of the conferences, by promoting greater interaction among the different constituencies. This will be critical in building credibility for a genuinely strengthened Economic and Social Council through the sustained engagement and commitment of stakeholders.

67. As in 2007, a series of preparatory activities were held prior to the annual ministerial review in 2008. These included: (a) an open, online, month-long, multi-stakeholder e-discussion on the theme of the annual ministerial review, which engaged discussants with wide geographic coverage and diversity of views; (b) national multi-stakeholder meetings in Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana in preparation of the voluntary national presentations taking the form of high-level dialogues with participants from Government, civil society and the private sector; (c) a regional forum in Bahrain on the theme of the review, bringing together multi-stakeholder participants from the region; and (d) an

informal event at United Nations Headquarters with expert panels examining sub-themes and engaging members of the United Nations community in interactive dialogue. The Economic and Social Council NGO Forum was held on 7 April 2008 as an opportunity to share best practices and success stories. At the 2007 annual ministerial review in Geneva, an Innovation Fair showcasing innovative programmes and projects was held with the participation of 12 United Nations system agencies, 29 civil society organizations and 10 private sector entities. The 2008 Innovation Fair is expected to draw a similar level of participation. **The Innovation Fair should evolve into a "matchmaking" event and be leveraged to seek solutions to the problems identified in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.**

68. The preparations for the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum have reflected the multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum. In addition to the Stakeholder Forum in Rome, which engaged parliamentarians and high-level representatives from civil society and local governments in an open and interactive dialogue on their roles in contributing to effective development cooperation, the high-level symposiums in Vienna and Cairo managed to provide stakeholders with a platform that complemented the participation of programme countries and bilateral and multilateral donors. Those three major preparatory events were each attended by more than 100 participants and partnerships with individual civil society, and international organizations played a key role in connecting a number of stakeholders. The inclusion of civil society organizations, parliamentarians as well as local government and private sector representatives provides for a unique opportunity to garner a wide range of inputs for a deepened dialogue on the future of international development cooperation. **The Forum should continue to take advantage of its distinctive profile by providing ample opportunities for the expression of views, priorities and analysis throughout the Development Cooperation Forum process.**

69. Economic and Social Council mechanisms such as the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Task Force, launched by the Council in 2001, and the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development, approved by the Secretary-General on 28 March 2006, provide lessons in building global multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances to further expand the Council's reach and circle of participants in its global policy dialogue.

III. Conclusion

70. **With the launching of the annual ministerial review, the process of integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences has become more substantive and visible. This should be nurtured by full support from functional commissions and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. However, structural and procedural changes for making the Economic and Social Council system more coherent and integrative will need to be reviewed at regular intervals. A triennial approach may be the best way to address this dimension of integrated follow-up.**

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Letter dated 2 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the pleasure to transmit the national report on progress towards the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to be presented at the annual ministerial review during the high-level segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

In this regard, I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Kanika **Phommachanh**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2008/100.

08-37807 (E) 250608

Annex to the letter dated 2 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

National report of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on progress towards the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals

National voluntary presentation

Summary

This report forms a brief picture of the implementation of selected internationally agreed development goals by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic over the past years. It highlights achievements made and identifies the key challenges encountered and provides lessons learned. It focuses on five important areas that the Lao Government considered crucial, namely, poverty eradication, education, health, gender equality and sustainable development.

In general, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of international development goals in these areas. Overall poverty rate has steadily declined from 46 per cent to 33 per cent during the decade 1992/3-2002/3 and reached 28.7 per cent by 2006. With this pace of progress, the country is on course to attain the Millennium Development Goal target of halving poverty by 2015. However, since poverty reduction is propelled by economic growth, the challenge for continued poverty reduction in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is to sustain the level of economic growth achieved over the previous decade.

In education and health, progress has been positive. Progress in education is reflected in the continuous progress across all key indicators, for instance: net enrolment rates in primary schools rose from 58 per cent of primary school-age children in 1991 to 84 per cent in 2005; the retention rate, although slow is improving; literacy rates increased nationwide; priority districts improved more than the national average, especially at primary age (basic education) and literacy almost doubled from 31 per cent to 58 per cent. On the health front, the child mortality indicators are improving satisfactorily. The under-five mortality rate declined from 170 to 98, and the infant mortality rate from 104 to 70 per 1,000 live births between 1995 and 2005.

The progress in promoting gender equality has varied. While considerable achievements have been recorded in terms of the woman's role in the decision-making process, especially the representation of women in the National Assembly, there is yet an existing gap in the enrolment rate between boys and girls, as well as challenges associated with the capacity-building of women. As regards sustainable development, various measures have been undertaken by the Lao Government to protect the environment, while promoting economic growth.

Despite progress and achievements made over the past years, this report notes that a lot needs to be done both by the Lao Government and the international community to help the Lao People's Democratic Republic attain all international development goals and targets. However, good practices and lessons learned can be drawn from the implementation process undertaken in this country.

1. Introduction

Classified by the UN as a Least Developed Country (LDC), the Lao PDR is one of the poorest countries in Asia. With an estimated per capita income of US $678, a population of around 5.6 million[1], and a land area of 236,800 km^2, the country has significant natural resources, including forestry, minerals, and hydropower. In spite of a declining share, agriculture is still the largest sector in the Lao economy, contributing 42% to GDP in 2006 and employing nearly 80% of the labour force. Landlocked and increasingly becoming land-linked, the Lao PDR shares borders with Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam and most of these neighbours are growing rapidly.

The Lao PDR is also one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with 49 official ethnic groups comprising some 200 ethnic subgroups. The population can be grouped into four broad ethnic categories: Lao-Tai, Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino-Tibet. While the variety of languages spoken by the different ethnic groups contributes to the rich linguistic diversity in Lao PDR, it also makes the task of including these groups in national development more complex. While most of the non-Lao-Tai live in upland areas, there is a wide disparity in geographic, economic and social living conditions, and cultural diversity that provide additional dimensions to the already challenging task of reducing poverty and move a subsistence-oriented and low-income country out of the LDC category by 2020.

The introduction of the "New Economic Mechanism" in 1986 began the country's transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy. Since then, the national economy of the Lao PDR has grown steadily. In the 1990s, it grew at an average rate of 6.3%. Annual growth has averaged 6.5% during 2000-06 and by 2007 it reached 7.5%. The Government aims to maintain the rapid economic growth so as to improve the living conditions of its people, meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and graduate out of the LDC status by 2020[2].

Poverty reduction forms the cornerstone of the Government's development agenda. It finalised an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (I-PRSP) in April 2002. The Government combined the I-PRSP with the then on-going 5th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) to prepare the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP). After consultations and discussion in the National Assembly, the NPEP was upgraded to the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) in 2004. The NGPES provided the framework for the country's future growth and poverty eradication programmes, and outlined the policy reform and public expenditure programmes needed to graduate the Lao PDR out of the LDC status by

[1] 2006 estimates.

[2] See enclosure for criteria for eligibility for least developed country status.

2020. Fully aligned with the MDGs, the NGPES forms a central part of the current 6th NSEDP (2006-10).

The Lao Government is strongly committed to implementing the 6th NSEDP (2006–10), which aims to create an enabling environment for economic growth, poverty eradication and macroeconomic stabilization. The NSEDP supports the achievement of the international development goals including MDGs, and the indicators and targets of the NSEDP coincide with most of those for the MDGs.

2. Implementation of the international development goals

2.1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Poverty in the Lao PDR is lower in urban than in remote areas; in localities with roads than those without roads. It is heavily concentrated in upland areas inhabited largely by ethnic groups. Recognizing this feature, the Lao Government's poverty reduction strategy, as laid out in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and the NSEDP (2006-10), revolves around the prioritization of 47 poorest districts for special poverty reduction programmes.

In view of the difficult geography and remoteness of parts of the country, the NGPES endorsed a strategy of poor area development. The implementation focused on the 47 priority districts out of a total of 142 districts, identified on a set of household, village, and district level indicators.[3] Subsequently, it was extended to another 25 poor districts[4]. Part of the Government's rural development and poverty alleviation strategy, resettlement or relocation of remote communities has been used by the Government to pursue multiple objectives such as reduction in shifting cultivation, eradication of opium cultivation, provision of social service, and enhance cultural integration and nation-building.

As a result, with strong commitment by Government and the international donors a remarkable record of poverty reduction has been made over the last fifteen years. Poverty in Lao PDR declined steadily from 46% to 33% during the decade 1992/3-2002/3 and reached 28.7% by 2006. With such pace of progress, the country is on course to attain the MDG target of halving poverty by 2015. Food poverty declined faster than overall poverty between 1992/3 to 2002/3, and the average number of months without sufficient rice in villages dropped between 1997/8 to 2002/3.

[3] For example, the household indicators include income and adequacy of food, clothing, housing, schooling and health care.

[4] These districts were identified based on a set of household, village, and district level indicators of basic minimum needs that include income and adequacy of food, clothing, housing, schooling and health care.

Key challenges

However, some challenges remained to be addressed. Malnutrition remains an acknowledged problem in the Lao PDR. The extent of child malnutrition is of concern with some small improvement since 1990. Estimates suggest that despite considerable efforts, 38% of children under five years of age are underweight. Chronic malnutrition or stunting remains a problem in Laos (affecting 41% of children under the age of five) and requires urgent attention by both government and the international community.

Even though a significant slice of growth in the last two decades has originated from the non-agricultural sector, the overall structure of the workforce has scarcely altered. More than 80% of workers are still engaged in subsistence-oriented agriculture and allied activities. There is little impact of the high and sustained growth in recent years on the workforce (especially agrarian and unprotected urban sectors), where low skill and poor health is widely prevalent.

Lesson learned: Continued poverty reduction in the Lao PDR needs to have a strong focus on sustainable agriculture, rural employment and income generation, and promote alternative livelihoods and continuous development of rural infrastructure. In 2003 agriculture still contributed approximately half of the total GDP and provided employment to 80% of the workforce. Over the last decade, agricultural growth averaged nearly 5% per year and was the most important driver in reducing rural poverty. Non-farm rural income opportunities are limited and agriculture's importance to rural households is high.

To sustain the reductions in poverty, the Lao PDR needs higher employment, higher unskilled wage-rates. The Lao PDR has the potential for high rates of sustainable agricultural growth that are key to continued reduction of rural poverty, and aiming for a 5-6% annual rate in the next decade is reasonable. Achieving this will involve transitioning from past reliance on extensive growth to a future that will depend more on intensive sources of growth.

2.2. Education

"Education is an important pillar of the Government's poverty reduction strategy"

Education is among the better performing sectors in the Lao PDR as reflected in the continuous progress across all key indicators. Net enrolment rates in primary schools rose from 58% of primary school-age children in 1991 to 84% in 2005.

Progress in retention of students at the primary level, however, is slow, like in other countries of a comparable level of human development. The primary completion rate increased by slightly more than 1 percentage point per year during 1991-2003. At this rate the MDG target looks beyond reach. Literacy rates increased nationwide, and priority districts improved more than the national average. At primary age (basic education), literacy almost doubled from 31% to 58%. The increase in the secondary age groups was more modest.

The improvements seen in education over the past decade are attributable both to economic growth and to the Government policy and interventions. The NSEDP (2006-10) has placed education as one of the four pillars of the poverty reduction strategy. Development of human resources to meet the demand of the socio-economic development of the country and thus reducing poverty is an important goal of NSEDP. The NSEDP provides detailed targets for the period and continues to identify three "pillars" of educational development in Lao PDR (similar to previous plan): (i) equity and access; (ii) quality and relevance; and (iii) strengthened administration and management. Commitment is also expressed to the design of "a comprehensive, balanced and harmonious Sector Wide Approach".

The Lao Government is committed to becoming a "Fast Track Initiative" (FTI) country. FTI is a global partnership initiative between donor and developing countries to ensure accelerated progress of developing countries toward achievement of universal primary education by 2015. FTI is based on mutual commitment where partner countries prioritize primary education through the development of comprehensive national education plans and development partners provide additional coordinated technical and financial assistance in a transparent and predictable manner. FTI is implemented at country level through country-owned programmes and allows development partners to provide increased volumes of aid more effectively through existing channels.

The Ministry of Education recently conducted the Education For All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) which reviewed and assessed the Lao PDR's progress against the EFA goals agreed at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar. EFA is the main vehicle for expanding access to primary and lower secondary education and adult literacy and is recognized as such in the NSEDP. The goals of EFA National Plan of Action (NPA) mirror those of the NSEDP and shall be achieved by consolidating three major tasks: (i) equitable access; (ii) improving quality and relevance; and (iii) strengthening education management.

Given its commitment to EFA and FTI, the Ministry of Education, with technical assistance from ADB and AusAID, is developing a ten-year Educational Sector Development Framework (ESDF) for 2008-18. The creation of the ESDF, will entail assessments of the projected expansion in primary, lower and upper secondary, technical and vocation training, non-formal education and tertiary levels and the

impact this expansion will have on the demand for physical facilities, teachers, textbooks, learning materials and institutional and management capacity. The framework will enable: (i) comprehensive projection of education sector resource requirements; (ii) focused and better coordinated external assistance; and (iii) more balanced sector development.

ESDF will also establish priorities to match resource availability. This process will enable the formulation of annual costed and prioritized plans, which are a requirement of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan. Such budget planning will be conducted on the basis of minimum requirements by unit costing per student at all levels and systems and reinforce the budget management mechanism of the sector in accordance with the principles laid out in the Vientiane Declaration.

The Government of Lao PDR has instituted some pro-poor policy incentives to encourage teachers to teach in rural and remote areas and in multigrade schools.

Key challenges

The Government's commitment toward attaining the MDG enrolment and literacy targets require extending education services to the most disadvantaged and underperforming sections elements of the population and removal of barriers that discriminate on the basis of location, gender, ethnic background or wealth.

Budgetary allocations are currently insufficient to meet the needs of the sector and continued reform of public administration is essential if development targets are to be reached. The proportion of the national budget that is allocated to education is relatively low. Public expenditure on education in Lao PDR collapsed with the Asian financial crisis in 1997-98. By 2006-7 the levels had nearly recovered to that of 1995, both in relation to GDP and as a proportion of total public spending. This recovery relates largely to inputs from development partners and does not imply any improvement in the share of domestic funding or in the ratio of recurrent to investment budget.

Since 2004-05, foreign funds contribute 90% of educational investment. Close to 60% of total education budget was externally funded in 2005-06. The ratio of foreign investment to recurrent budget expenditure is declining. The effect of this decline is that schools will be built without the necessary operating budget to pay for teachers, buy textbooks or other resources and perform general maintenance.

National averages hide variations across regions and ethnic groups, and often provinces with low enrolment rates are the ones with high proportion of rural, poor and children of different ethnic groups.

Lesson learned: Pushing up enrolment and literacy rates are usually the first policy interventions of any government. While progress on both these indicators has been satisfactory so far, reaching the last 15-20% of the population is always hard and will require additional effort and resources. It is also important to ensure that the Government's push toward attaining the MDG enrolment and literacy targets is such that it benefits all people regardless of their location, gender, ethnic groups or wealth. Effective public expenditure management reform is required to allocate adequate resources and infrastructure across provinces, for all pupils to complete the primary and lower secondary education and to improve the quality of education, develop a pool of trained teachers and improve curriculum to build its human resource capacity and extend educational opportunities to all. Special efforts need to be made to extend the benefits of education to the people without adequate access to basic education. Improvement in enrolment rates needs to be combined with improvement in teacher training to ensure modern methods of teaching sciences, languages and technology.

2.3. Health

Reducing Child Mortality

Nationally, the Lao PDR's child mortality indicators are improving satisfactorily. The under-5 mortality rate declined from 170 to 98, and the infant mortality rate from 104 to 70 per 1000 live births between 1995 and 2005. At this rate the 2015 MDG mortality targets seem within reach, though mortality rates are much higher in rural areas, particularly in the most remote districts, than in urban areas.

The progress in mortality indicators is not matched by equally steady progress in immunization of 1-year old children against measles. Until 2007, the proportion of children immunized remained more or less constant, at around the low proportion of 69%. While the recent measles immunization campaign reached over 95% of the target group due to a concerted mobilization of high-level political support and resources, the challenge is now to make necessary institutional changes to sustain this success over coming years.

A cause of concern is the child malnutrition. Insufficient nutrition makes children more vulnerable to communicable diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and meningitis, for those children that are not reached by immunisation campaigns. In turn, children who are not reached by essential child health care services are more vulnerable to malnutrition. The fact that child mortality has declined at the same time may be because of increased access to primary health care services such as

village drug kits, village health volunteers, medical and preventive outreach services and easy access to antibiotics.

To get an overall perspective of the state of child health in the Lao PDR, it is important to view the progress in overall child mortality against progress in inter-related indicators such as immunization, nutrition, and access to health services. This will help to devise suitable interventions in order to stabilise the positive trend.

Lesson learned: Most child deaths are caused by neonatal conditions and communicable diseases, in particular malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and epidemics such as dengue fever, measles or meningitis. To address this, the government has to tackle some of the more difficult problems, such as ensuring universal access to quality health care and particularly skilled birth attendants, combating malnutrition, and increasing and sustaining immunisation coverage.

Improved maternal mortality

It is widely acknowledged that to reduce maternal mortality women need to have access to broader reproductive health services especially family planning, skilled assistance at birth and access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care for management of complications.

The Maternal Mortality Ratio, or MMR, is as difficult to estimate accurately, without a strong vital registration system for births and deaths, as it is to reduce in a short span of time. As revealed by the 1995 and 2005 population censuses, the Lao PDR appears to have made progress in reducing maternal mortality - from a figure of 650 deaths per 100.000 live births in 1995, to 405 deaths per 100.000 live births in 2005. Given the difficulties inherent in estimating MMR, it is not unexpected that the Government's estimate is not in line with the global estimate 660 with a range of uncertainty between 190 – 1600 per 100.000. Irrespective of estimated progress, the maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the region, and it is doubtful if Lao PDR can reach the MDG 5 target given the current levels of investment for maternal health.

Reduction in maternal mortality does not take place in isolation. Rather, it is dependent upon a number of complex factors, and assessing progress on maternal mortality requires a review of these factors. Equally the MMR does not measure maternal health for behind every woman who dies due to complications during pregnancy or childbirth, 20 women survive but suffer from ill health or disability.

Most pregnancy-related deaths occur around the time of delivery, or soon after a termination. Increasing the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel and with referral capacity to emergency obstetric and neonatal care will significantly reduce maternal and perinatal mortality. The MDG indicator on proportion of births attended by skilled birth health personnel increased by less than 5 percentage points between 1994 and 2005. Universal access to reproductive health is measured by indicators on access and usage of contraception, antenatal care and adolescent fertility. While there has been significant progress in the access and use of contraception, the percentage of births to women receiving antenatal care remain low at 28.5 % (LRHS 2005). Early marriage and pregnancy is still the norm in rural areas where access to life saving services in case of pregnancy related complications are limited.

Lesson learned: The main priority inventions include family planning to reduce unwanted pregnancies, presence of skilled birth attendants at deliveries, and access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care. These interventions will only be effective if they reach out to women in rural and remote communities. Improvement in the population's health status is a central priority of the NSEDP. Some impressive achievements sit alongside limited progress in certain key areas. A 25% reduction in age-specific fertility rate and the doubling of the contraceptive prevalence rate from 1995 to 2005 are remarkable outcomes. On the other hand the slow increase in the number of births assisted by skilled attendants and the limited availability of emergency obstetric and neonatal care suggest weaknesses in health service provision that could threaten progress on MMR in the future. In order to increase utilization of health services and provide the reproductive health care that is needed to improve the maternal and neonatal health, investment in training and capacity building for health personnel, especially skilled birth attendants, is required. Health systems must meet minimum standards in terms of human resources, infrastructure, supplies, and management. Consequently, recurrent budget expenditures for the health sector including reproductive health need to be increased, and sufficient revenue should be directed to the health sector in general.

Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

HIV prevalence in the general population in Lao PDR remains low, but varies considerably between risk groups and locations. While knowledge of disease transmission is high, there is still a big gap between knowledge and desired behaviors. Correct and consistent used of condoms is low and STI levels continue to be high among service women. As Laos is surrounded by countries with high HIV prevalence,

and is experiencing an increase in mobility of its working-age population within and across its borders, the threat of an expanding HIV epidemic in the country remains real.

A large proportion of Lao population is exposed to Malaria and the early 1990s noted an increase in the morbidity rate. Since then there has been an appreciable drop which may be largely due to the increase in number of people sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets. Death rates from malaria fell from 9 per 100 000 in 1990 to 0.4 in 2006. Still a lot of ground has to be covered to meet the MDG target. Considerable progress has been made in tuberculosis case detection and the MDG target seems to have been achieved by 2005.

Combating Malaria and tuberculosis on a sustained basis requires new drugs to fight the malarial parasite that has become resistant to the drug, and the emergence of new strains of tuberculosis that are multi-drug resistant and are also associated with HIV infection.

The national Malaria control programme revised its treatment policies in 2004 to include Artemisinin based combination therapy (ACTs) as the first line of treatment for uncomplicated malaria. Monitoring of routine sentinel drug resistance currently shows no resistance to ACTs in Laos.

Lesson learned: - While the prevention of new HIV infections will remain the priority in the Lao PDR, care and support services, including ARV, need to be scaled up. The full package of services needs to be expanded and sustained among appropriate target populations. Blood transfusion services need to ensure that proper cross matching is done, and that proper guidelines are followed in administering blood and blood products. Combating malaria and tuberculosis needs to be continued on a sustained basis. In addition, funding and donor support for TB and malaria control needs to be more diversified. New drugs are required to fight the malarial parasite that has become more resistant to the traditional treatments. Availability of insecticide-treated bed nets need to be expanded through both government distribution and social marketing. There should be efforts to strengthen cross-border malaria control. There is a need for early detection and effective treatment of malaria through comprehensive primary health care approaches. Community participation is also critical to ensure early detection.

2.4. *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*

In order to achieve gender equality, it is necessary, to place women's empowerment at the center of national development plans. This includes ensuring that women and girls enjoy a set of basic human capabilities as measured by indicators on education, health, and nutrition; have equal opportunities to use or apply their basic capabilities, including in non-agricultural wage employment and political representation; and have reduced vulnerability to violence and abuse. This has clearly reflected in the commitment by the Lao Government to the promotion of equality between men and women that is articulated as priorities in the NSEDP (2006-10). The gender strategy – aimed at reducing poverty – is founded on the important role played by Lao women in the society. The effective participation of women, especially poor and ethnic women, is essential for the country to achieve the goals of reducing poverty and improving living standards.

The Constitution of the Lao PDR provides a fundamental basis for gender equality by providing that all Lao citizens are equal before the law irrespective of gender, social status, beliefs and ethnicity and that Lao citizens enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, culture and social fields and in family affairs. The current national framework consisting of — *the Constitution (Articles 22 and 24), various laws such as the Law on Women Development and Protection (2003), and institutions such as the LWU and the Lao Commission for the Advancement of Women (LaoNCAW)* — provide an enabling environment for achieving gender equality in the country. In addition, the Lao PDR has also ratified various international Conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1981), and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). The Government is also committed to implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include gender equality and women's advancement.

In accordance with the implementation of CEDAW, the Lao PDR has steadily made progress toward gender equality and elimination of discrimination by legislative and policy reform on gender-related issues. The Government's commitment to the implementation of CEDAW led to the establishment of the LaoNCAW in April 2003 and the adoption of the Law on the Development and Protection of Women by the National Assembly in October 2004. Under the leadership of LaoNCAW, a number of Ministries have begun to mainstream gender into their activities, while some are in the process of setting up teams to undertake the process. Sub-Commissions for the Advancement of Women (Sub-CAWs) have been established pursuant to Government Instruction in units within Ministries and equivalent organizations, as well in the provinces with a view to ensuring more practical implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Furthermore, NSEDP (2006-10) aims to achieve gender equality in all spheres of society. This is in recognition of the fact that Lao PDR will not be able to realise its

socio-economic development goals without active participation of all women, and particularly poor and ethno-linguistic minority women. The NSEDP recognizes that gender is an issue that is interdependent to other priority areas and it is therefore crucial to involve women in local decision-making, take their needs into account when developing programmes and plans, support poor women's economic activities and improve their access to basic services (education, health and productive resources eg. extension services).

The NSEDSP also details several strategies for improving gender disparities in education. They include recruitment of ethnic teachers, providing incentives for girls to go to school, scheduling primary and secondary classes to encourage school attendance, building dormitories for girls who live too far to travel to school daily and providing distance education and bridging courses to enable female students to enter vocational and technical schools. The Public Administration and Civil Service Authority is in the process of developing a Civil Service Code of Conduct which will deal with discrimination in the civil service and set out grounds of recourse for those affected.

The achievement in elimination of gender disparity is mixed. In education, progress has been slow. Fewer girls than boys are enrolled at all levels, and this share is even lower at the higher education levels. The number of girls per 100 boys in primary education has risen from 77 in 1991 to 86 in 2006. Over the same period, indices for lower secondary education improved from 66% to 78%, for upper secondary from 56 to 74 and for tertiary from 49 to 62%. Low educational levels of girls adversely affect women's prospects of non-agricultural wage employment. In the 10-year period (1995-2005) for which data is available, the share of women in wage employment increased less than 1 percentage point per year, which is close to the rate at which girls narrowed the school enrolment gap. Because of the very slow pace at which the gender gap closes, achieving the MDG targets for elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015 seem ambitious. The picture is different, however, when it comes to women's political representation. The proportion of female members of the National Assembly has increased significantly, from 6% in 1990 to 25% in 2006, and is among the highest in the region. With three female Ministers in the Government as well as one female Vice-Minister and five equivalent positions filled by women, it is clear that progress has been made.

Key challenges

Although at national level there has been an overall improvement in indicators for gender equality and empowerment of women, the challenge lies in identifying and addressing the causes of the great disparities that exist between urban and rural areas and between different ethnic groups.

While the establishment of LaoNCAW and the support of the Government in establishing SubCAWs within Ministries and provinces is an extremely positive step, it is widely acknowledged that at present, these organisations are lacking critical capacity to carry out their mandate. In order to ensure these organisations can provide the requisite support to Government in the area of gender policy and strategic action toward the advancement of women, capacity building activities are necessary. It is also necessary to look at public expenditure and the link between reform and gender sensitive policies and programs. The reform of the public expenditure system must result in more appropriate investment in education and greater allocations of budget toward addressing gender disparities and to building the capacity of institutions such as LaoNCAW.

Despite the increased numbers of women members of the National Assembly, there is an ongoing need to improve their skills and capacity in a more systematic manner so as to enable them to participate more fully and enhance their role. There is also a need to work with all members of the National Assembly, to focus on gender roles and the impacts of legislation on women and to arm members with the appropriate skills and knowledge so that legislation and potential impacts can be deliberated and discussed. There is a need to create conditions in which women can better participate in the process of policy and decision-making at all levels, increasingly sharing responsibilities in different sectors.

Lesson learned: To achieve more gender equality it requires a better understanding at all levels of the dynamics that sustain and/or create gender inequalities; targeted policies, strategies, actions and re-prioritising public expenditure. And this, in turn, requires committed leadership and political will. As gender inequality is deeply rooted in entrenched attitudes, societal institutions and market forces, political commitment at the highest national level is essential to institute the policies that can trigger social change and to allocate the resources necessary to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

The newly set up Lao National Commission for the Advancement in Women (LNCAW) provides an excellent opportunity for the government to mainstream gender issues across various sectors. Although the government has begun to collect data disaggregated by sex, there is a need to further pursue data collection and dissemination on gender issues, in order to better sensitize decision-makers and communities to the problems faced by the female population.

2.5 *Sustainable Development*

The Lao PDR is endowed with diverse, productive and ecologically unique natural resources. Poverty is linked to environmental conditions as poor people rely disproportionately on the environment, in particular agricultural biodiversity resources, to meet their daily needs. For example, forests supply poor people with non-wood forest products for consumption, shelter, fuel, and an important source of income. The conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity play an important role in the Lao PDR to achieve the MDGs 1 and 7 as there is a strong link between natural resources and nutrition in this country.

Lao PDR has a wealth of natural resources: forest cover that is substantially higher than in surrounding countries; the largest per capita volume of (internal) renewable water resources in the region; and considerable mineral resources, such as gold, lignite and copper. Lao PDR is also one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in the region. A relatively low population density and a moderate rate of natural resource utilization[5] relative to neighbouring countries have allowed significant natural and cultivated biological resources to survive.

These natural resources have catalysed past economic growth throughout the Lao PDR, playing a significant role in supporting rural livelihoods and contributing towards the national economy. For example, over 80% of the population is engaged in agriculture and fisheries and are, thus, directly dependent on the natural resource base. Timber and hydropower are Lao PDR's primary exports, accounting for two-thirds of total export value. According to the Lao economic monitor(April 2008) the real GDP growth was recorded 7.5% in 2007 and is projected to reach 7.9% in 2008.

Currently, forest areas cover up to 25% of land in some northern provinces and as much as 70% in some of the southern provinces. Forest resources play a central role in the Lao economy. In 1998 forest products accounted for 42% of the country's foreign exchange earnings, but their share declined to about 10% in 2006. Forests in Lao PDR make essential contributions to nutrition, income, energy and shelter for the 80% of the Lao population residing in rural areas that rely on non-timber forest products for subsistence and for offsetting seasonal food shortages. Forest areas contain rich ecosystem diversity and species of great national and international importance. In addition, they provide other environmental services to the well-being of the local people by controlling soil erosion, protecting watersheds and supporting agriculture. However, the integrity and functions of these forests are being degraded by

[5] Actually, Lao exhibits a very high rate of natural resource utilization once access to an area is feasible. It is actually the lack of access to many parts of the country that his restricted the scale of extraction of natural resources. Within the last decade, is changing as access improves in the absence of management and the country is experiencing a steep decline in populations of many species of animals and plants.

unsustainable harvesting of wood and non-wood forest products[6] due to inadequate management.

The forest resources continue to decline at a rapid pace. During the 1940s, the forest cover represented about 70% of the total area which had declined to about 64% in the beginning of the 1960s and to 42% by 2002. This is largely due to clearing of lowland forest for permanent agriculture and unsustainable logging. Given the limited diversification of the Lao economy, forest clearing continues at an estimated rate of 134,000 ha per annum and at this rate country's last remaining forest may disappear by 2070.

An estimated 146,000 hectares of planted forests have been established, particularly in a recent planting boom since 2006, primarily by large foreign companies. Additional farmers are beginning to use agricultural land for plantations instead of agricultural production. In some instances natural forests have been cleared to establish planted forests. A multi-stakeholder process to prepare a national guideline for responsible management of planted forests is underway to enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits of planted forests.

Although Lao PDR is a minor player to climate change, climate change at the global and regional levels may have significant impacts on the Lao PDR. The country's contributions to GHG emissions were mainly related to widespread use of fuel wood and swidden agriculture, or slash-and-burn farming. The conservation and sustainable management of agricultural biodiversity can play a role in adapting to the effects of climate change. Global and regional climate change scenarios and their impact to the Lao people should be considered.

Government strategy on sustainable development

The institutional structure for environmental management in the Lao PDR consists of: (i) national committees that guide inter-sectoral coordination among agencies; (ii) national-level ministries and agencies, which have a core role in environmental protection and conservation; (iii) provincial and district entities that have devolved responsibility for environmental protection; and (iv) mass organizations which support the government in promoting public participation and awareness.

The Forestry Law was amended in 2007 to strengthen sustainable management of forest and the Wildlife Law was also enacted to provide a stronger legal framework for biodiversity conservation. Implementation and enforcement of these laws are keys to meeting the targets. Furthermore, the Government has formulated a wide array of legislation and regulations for environmental conservation and protection. The Environmental Protection Law (1999), supported by its Implementing Decree (2002),

[6] Lao suffers from the "empty forest" syndrome. Except in the most inaccessible areas, the forests of Lao have abnormally low levels of most wild animals due to unmanaged extraction.

is the country's principal environmental legislation. It includes measures for the protection, mitigation and restoration of the environment, as well as guidelines for environmental management and monitoring.

Significant steps can be made in the areas of fisheries legislative reform, more effective design and operation of water control systems (e.g. irrigation), better appreciation of the contribution of wetlands and water habitats in sustaining aquatic biodiversity and a more rigorous commitment to environmental impact and true valuation of the costs of water development initiatives, not only by the Lao Government, but more importantly by the private sector investment and engineering interests and the lending institutions, which support them.

Lesson learned: The Government has enacted a wide array of legislation, regulations and action plans for environmental conservation and protection, including through other sectors such as health. The Environmental Protection Law (1999), supported by its Implementing Decree (2002), is the principal environmental legislation. It includes measures for the protection, mitigation and restoration of the environment, as well as guidelines for environmental management and monitoring. The Prime Minister's Decree on Health Impact Policy was enacted in 2007 to safe-guard public health. National Environmental Health Action Plans are being drafted to provide multi-sectoral collaboration and cooperation on environment and health programmes in the country. The capacity of various institutions to implement and enforce environmental regulations as well as environmental action plans needs to be strengthened. In addition, there is an urgent need to increase awareness of the need for environmental protection and environmental and health correlations among the general public. The Forestry Law was amended in 2007 to strengthen sustainable management of forest and the Wildlife Law was also enacted to provide a stronger legal framework for biodiversity conservation. Implementation and enforcement of these laws are one of the keys to meeting the targets.

Enclosure

Summary statistics on the Millennium Development Goals indicators

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day					
1.1. Proportion of population below $1 (PPP) per day[1]	46 (1992)	39 (1997)	34 (2002)		24
1.2. Poverty gap ratio	11 (1992)	10 (1997)	8 (2002)		8
1.3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption	9 (1992)	8 (1997)	8 (2002)		Not decided
Target 1B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people					
1.4. Growth rate of GDP per person employed		5% per year (1995-97)		8.5% per year (2002-05)	
1.5 Employment-to-population ratio		47		49	Under consideration
1.7 Proportion of own account and contributing family workers in total employment		90		88	Under consideration
Target 1C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger					
1.8. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age		44 (1993)	40	38 (2006)	26
1.8A Prevalence of stunting in children under-five years of age		48 (1993)	42	41 (2006)	35
1.9. Proportion of population below food poverty line[2]		38	33	22	19

Note: [1] This refers to national poverty line.

[2] This indicator is a proxy for "proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption".

Sources: LECSI (1992-93); LECSII (1997-98); LECSIII (2002-03); Population Census (1995, 2005), MICS III (2006), LSIS

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 2A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling					
2.1. Net enrolment rate in primary school	58 (1991)		80 (2001)	84	98
2.2. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5	48 (1991)		62 (2001)	62	95
2.3. Literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years	71 (1995)		79 (2001)	84	99

Sources: Ministry of Education; Population Census (1995, 2005); Lao National Literacy Survey (LNLS)

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015					
3.1. Ratio of girls to boys (Number of girls per 100 boys) enrolled (^) in	(all 1991)		(all 2002)	(all 2006)	
- Primary	77		84	86	100
- Lower secondary	66		74	78	100
- Upper secondary	56		68	74	100
- Tertiary	49		57	62	100
3.2. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)		38		44 50 (2006)	No target
3.3. Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament	6		23 (2002)	25 (2006)	Target under consideration

Sources: Ministry of Education; Population Census (1995, 2005); NSC, "Economic Census", 2007; National Assembly

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 4A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate					
4.1. Under-five mortality rate		170	107	98	70
4.2. Infant mortality rate		104	82	70	45
4.3. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles		68	60	69	90

Sources: The 1995 and 2005 figures from the Population Census (1995, 2005); the 2000 figure from the LRHS (2005); Ministry of Health (Immunisation Centre)

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 5A: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio					
5.1. Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)		650	530	405	260
5.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled birth personnel		14 (1994)	17	23*	50
Target 5B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health					
5.3. Contraceptive prevalence rate		20 (1994)	32	38	No target
5.4 Ante-natal care coverage			96	76	No target
5.5 Age-specific fertility rate			21	28.5	No target
5.6 Unmet need for family planning (Dropped)			40	27	

* The estimate is weighted and therefore higher than the 18.5 in the LRHS 2005.

Source: Ministry of Health, LRHS (2005)

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 6A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS					
HIV prevalence among general population (%)			0.06 (2001)	0.1 (2007)	<1
6.1. HIV prevalence among high-risk group 15-24 years old (%)			0.4 (2001)		<5%
HIV prevalence among commercial sex workers 15-49 years old (%)			0.9 (2001)	2 (2004)	<5
Percentage of condom use among commercial sex workers			72.7 (2001)	54.4 (2004)	
Target 6B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it					
6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs					
Target 6C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases					
6.6. Death rates associated with malaria (per 100,000 population)	9	14	7	0.4 (2006)	0.2
Morbidity rate due to malaria (confirmed cases per year per 1000)	10 (1991)	12	8	3 (2006)	
6.7. Proportion of children under-5 sleeping under bed-nets			82	87 (2006)	95
6.8. Prevalence and death rates associated with Tuberculosis (per 100,000)	472		357	306	240
6.9. Proportion of Tuberculosis cases detected and cured under Directly-Observed Treatment Short Courses (DOTS) - detected - cured		 24 72	 42 80	 72 90	 70 85

Source: Data from CHAS, WHO, UNAIDS; CMPE, MICS, various years; WHO for data on TB

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015 Target
Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources					
7.1. Proportion of land area covered by forests (%)	47 (1992)		42 (2002)		Under consideration
7.2. CO_2 emissions, total, per capita and per $1 GDP (PPP) and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (metric tones)		50 (1999)	42 (2002)	18 (2006)	0
7.4. Proportion of total water resources used (%)		2 (1999)		2-5 (2006)	
Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss					
7.6 Proportion of species threatened with extinction (%)				1.6 (2004)	
Target 7C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation					
7.7. Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (%)	28		52	74[7] (2007)	80
7.8. Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility (%)		29	37	49[8] (2007)	60

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forest ;, Science Technology and Environment Agency ; LECS; Population Census; National Centre for Environnemental Heath and Water Supply

[7] Definition and criteria for improved water and sanitation coverage used in this report, provided by the National Centre for Environmental Heath and Water Supply (Nam Saat), varied from province to province, and hence there is a need of an agreed set of criteria (and definition) to report future water and sanitation coverage.

[8] Ibid.

Goal 8: Partnership for development

	1990	1995	2000	2002	2005	2015 Target
Target 8A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system						
Average tariffs imposed on exports of agri products, clothing and textiles to developed markets economies with which Lao PDR has - MFN status - preferential trade agreements	 21 17		 20 17	 8 7	 8 6	
Proportion of exports of agricultural products, clothing and textiles (by value) to developed market economies from Lao PDR admitted free of duty	99		98	100	99	No targets
The border cost related to importing one container (US$ per container)					1690	
The border cost relating to exporting one container (US$ per container)					1420	
Target 8B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries **Target 8C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries**						
8.1 Proportion of total bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services				32 (2003)	35 (2004)	
8.3 Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied						
ODA received as - proportion of its GDP - in US$ per capita				 21 74	 13 81	No targets
8.4 ODA received as proportion of its GNI	17	17	17	16	11	
Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity						
Proportion of ODA grants to LDCs that goes to Lao PDR	0.6	1.8	2.3	1.7	0.9	
Net ODA received from OECD/DAC donors by Lao PDR as percent of its GDP		9.7	11.2	9.8	5.5	
Target 8D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problem						
Debt servicing as a percentage of exports of goods and services	8.5	6.1	9 (2001)			No targets
Target 8F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication						
8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.5	1.6	No targets

	1990	1995	2000	2002	2005	2015 Target
8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population			0.6 (2001)	9.8	13.5	
8.16 Internet users per 100 population				0.05 (2004)	0.08	
Access to radio		36 (1997)	46 (2002)			
Access to television		31 (1997)	41 (2002)			

Sources: World Bank Doing Business; Foreign Aid Report, MoFA; UN; OECD; Song

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Letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which was prepared for the national voluntary presentation of Kazakhstan, to be held during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 3 July 2008 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Byrganym **Aitimova**
Permanent Representative

* E/2008/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: Russian]

National report on the achievement of Kazakhstan's strategic priorities to 2030 in the light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Astana — 2008

List of abbreviations

1.	TSA	Targeted social assistance
2.	OE	Office for Emergencies
3.	GDP	Gross domestic product
4.	GPS	Global positioning systems
5.	UNT	Uniform national testing
6.	EU	European Union
7.	CWR	Committee on water resources
8.	LA	Local announcements
9.	SUS	School under strength
10.	ME	Ministry of the Environment
11.	ILO	International Labour Organization
12.	IFSAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
13.	NGO	Non-governmental organization
14.	EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
15.	UN	United Nations
16.	SPNT	Specially Protected National Territories
17.	ODA	Official Development Assistance
18.	ODS	Ozone depleting substances
19.	GG	Greenhouse gases
20.	PSI	Periodic State inspection
21.	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
22.	CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
23.	AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
24.	Strategy-2030	Long-term development strategy "Kazakhstan — 2030. Prosperity, security and improved living standards for all Kazakhs"
25.	TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
26.	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
27.	ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
28.	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
29.	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

30.	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
31.	UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
32.	UNPFA	United Nations Population Fund
33.	USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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"Improving living standards for the people of Kazakhstan is the principal aim of Government policy"

Message from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, February 2008

Introduction

Priorities of the national strategy and the Millennium Development Goals

The strategic development priorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan are to improve the quality of life for the population by reducing social exclusion and raising the quality of social services, improving the environment, involving civil society in development and strengthening national identity.

The long-term development strategy "Kazakhstan-2030. Prosperity, security and improved living standards for all Kazakhs" was adopted in 1997. It identified 7 priorities for the country's development.

- Priority 1: National security
- Priority 2: Domestic stability and social cohesion
- Priority 3: Economic growth
- Priority 4: Health, education and welfare for the citizens of Kazakhstan
- Priority 5: Energy resources
- Priority 6: Infrastructure, transport and communications
- Priority 7: A professional State

Since 1998 all the programmes adopted in the country are being developed in accordance with the Development Strategy for Kazakhstan to the year 2030. The following have been adopted in the light of the Strategy:

- A strategy for industrial development and innovation to 2015 (2003);
- A plan for environmental security for the Republic of Kazakhstan to 2015 (2003);
- A strategy for gender equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 (2005);
- A strategy to place Kazakhstan among the 50 most competitive countries in the world (2006);
- A strategy for territorial development in the Republic of Kazakhstan to the year 2015;
- A plan for the transition of the Republic of Kazakhstan to sustainable development over the period 2007-2024 (2006);
- A programme to combat poverty and unemployment in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2000-2002;

- The State programme for poverty reduction, 2000-2005;
- The State programme for reforming and developing the health system in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2005-2010;
- The State programme for educational development in Kazakhstan, 2005-2010;
- The programme "Developing agricultural land", 2004-2010;
- The programme «Drinking water supplies», 2002-2010;
- The programme for environmental protection, 2004-2007;
- The programme for environmental protection, 2008-2010;
- The programme to combat desertification, 2005-2015;
- The HIV/AIDS control programme in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2001-2005;
- The comprehensive programme to tackle the problems of the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site, 2005-2007.

The chief priority in all the programmes which have been adopted is to raise living standards for present and future generations of Kazakhs, on the basis of qualitative improvements in development. The long-term strategic development of Kazakhstan is closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). All the goals and targets of the MDGs are reflected in the above national and sectoral development programmes; measures to achieve some of them have already been put in place, and measures to achieve other MDGs are presently continuing.

Progress in implementing the National Development Strategy and the policies being followed

The country has the potential to achieve these priorities, together with the necessary conditions for doing so.

Above all, domestic stability and social cohesion, together with a multi-dimensional natural resource potential and reforms over the past 10 years have brought about high rates of economic growth.

Over the past decade, gross domestic product has risen from US$ 22 to US$ 104.1 billion, and GDP per head of population has increased 4.6 times to US$ 6,700, on a par with the indicators of a number of States in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thanks to the creation of a favourable climate for investment, considerable volumes of investment have been attracted into the country's economy. The volume of direct foreign investment in the Kazakh economy from 1993 to 2007 reached US$ 62.1 billion, representing 80 per cent of all outside investment in Central Asia. The country's international assets, taking account of National Fund resources, are in excess of US$ 38.6 billion. The volume of annual external trade increased more than sixfold over the decade, and is now around US$ 80.5 billion. Banking and insurance sectors and a contributory pension scheme have all been set up according to market principles. In the opinion of the international rating agencies, the Republic has successfully completed the transitional stage of economic development, and now has sufficient potential for future economic growth.

According to the World Bank classification, Kazakhstan is among the group of countries at average income level. In 10 years the incomes of Kazakh citizens have risen 6.5 times, earnings have quintupled, pensions have quadrupled and targeted State social assistance has markedly increased.

There are plans to build 150 health facilities and 300 rural dispensaries in the near future, along with a regional network of rehabilitation centres for adult and child invalids in line with international standards. Since 1998 the Presidential programme "Bolashak" has been in operation countrywide, providing tuition for talented young people in the world's best universities. In the coming years 250 new schools and 50 vocational technical colleges are to be built.

The Republic now has the necessary political will and the resources to drive forward the social aspects of progress and transform its economic achievements so as to achieve equitable development of its human potential, while improving living standards and increasing opportunities for its citizens. The country has already achieved some of the agreed development goals, and has attained significant progress in achieving others, including poverty reduction, access to education and progress in women's rights. However, in health, education and economic sustainability there are still problems calling for additional efforts on the part of the State and civil society.

Part A
Implementing the National Development Strategy

Eliminating extreme poverty and hunger

Of special importance for the reduction of poverty in Kazakhstan is the long-term development strategy "Kazakhstan — 2030. Prosperity, security, and improved living standards for all Kazakhs" and the Government programmes for combating poverty (2000-2001) and reducing poverty (2002-2005). Since 2002 the law "On targeted State social assistance" (referred to below as the "Law") has been in effect. Under this law low-income families are paid a targeted form of social assistance for each family member (hereinafter — TSA) to meet the difference between average income per head and the official poverty threshold (40 per cent of subsistence income).

As a result of implementing the Law and the programme measures for reducing poverty:

- A database on low-income families has been set up, together with an automated system for selecting TSA beneficiaries;[4]
- A range of methods of reducing poverty has been identified and put into use, combining active methods (creating jobs, vocational training and retraining, public works) and passive ones (increasing wages, pensions and social benefits).
- The number of poor people with average incomes below the poverty threshold has been reduced to less than one fifth (there were 224,800 people in receipt of TSA on 1 January 2008) and this has made it possible to reduce expenditure on the payment of TSA by 3.6 times.

According to the 2005 national report on the attainment of the MDGs, in 2004 Kazakhstan had already achieved the target of reducing by half the proportion of people living on an income below subsistence level. Thus one of the principal development goals of the millennium — eliminating extreme poverty and hunger — has been met.

The theory and practice of social assistance are continuing to develop, taking account of the experience and recommendations of international institutions.

Kazakhstan is taking steps to improve its system of targeted social assistance by introducing measures to motivate unemployed citizens in receipt of TSA to train for a new job, retrain or look for work.

As a result of the reforms carried out in the social sphere, a mixed system of social protection has been created, including State support, pension fund provision and social security and insurance.

A basic pension was introduced in 2005. This is a guaranteed minimum payment for all those reaching pension age, irrespective of their entitlement to a State or contributory scheme pension.

Official social indicators are on the rise. Since 2006, in line with the recommendations of international experts at UNDP and ILO, improvements have been made to the method of calculating the minimum level of subsistence — the relative proportions of food and non-food items in the consumer basket have been brought closer to actual expenditure by the low-income groups in the population, and the range of food items purchased has more than doubled, resulting in a 25 per cent increase in the minimum subsistence level.

The law provides for the basic social norm to be applied in establishing the minimum subsistence level. This norm is used to determine minimum monthly earnings, basic social benefits and the poverty threshold. This basic indicator has the advantage of making it possible to compare levels of social benefits with the minimum subsistence level.

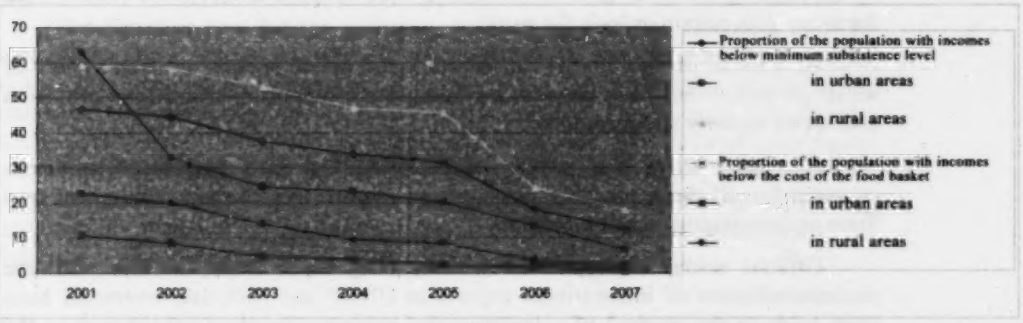
Since 2008 the basic pension has been set at 40 per cent of the minimum subsistence level. Pensions are continuing to increase. In the first months of 2008, average pension payments increased by 29 per cent above the basic pension.

The social support system for families with children has continued to develop. In 2006, in addition to the single payment made on the birth of a child (payable since 2003), the following benefits have been introduced: a payment for caring for a child of up to one year old, the amount of which varies depending on the number of children in the family (from one to four or more) and a payment for children up to the age of 18 in low-income families whose income is below the cost of the standard food basket.

Since January 2008 the rates of benefit paid on the birth of a child and for caring for a child have increased by 2 and 1.6 times respectively. In 2010-2011 a further staged increase is planned in the 2007 benefit rates: payments for those looking after a child will rise on average by 2.5, and those for the birth of a fourth or subsequent child will more than quadruple. Social insurance has already been introduced for pregnancy, childbirth and childcare.

Work is continuing to improve the method of calculating the minimum subsistence level. The measures being taken to raise the living standards of the population have cut poverty levels by 1.7 in 2006 by comparison with 2005 (to 18.2 per cent), and the figures for 2007 indicate that poverty levels have fallen to 12.7 per cent (diagram 1). The Gini coefficient fell from 0.332 in 1999 to 0.309 in 2007.

Diagram 1
Evolution of living standards, 2001-2007



Source: Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Nevertheless, according to the 2007 figures, 1.4 per cent of the population had incomes below the poverty threshold. Families with children were the worst off. Among recipients of TSA, children account for 61.2 per cent and those looking after children, 13.2 per cent. The unemployed, at 11.7 per cent, are another numerous group.

In recent years income inequality in the population has decreased, but this is still a problem and continuing effort is needed to reduce it further.

Regional disparities in poverty levels

There are regional differences in poverty. The largest proportions of poor people are found in the Qyzylorda (37.5 per cent) and Mangghystau (26.5 per cent) regions. The capital of the Republic, Astana, is relatively well off at 5.5 per cent, and so are Pavlodar region (12 per cent) and the city of Almaty (12.1 per cent). These are the regions with the lowest poverty rates. Even with the fall in the percentages of poor people in urban locations (from 20.2 per cent to 13.6 per cent) and in rural areas (from 45.6 per cent to 24.4 per cent), poverty remains largely concentrated among rural inhabitants.

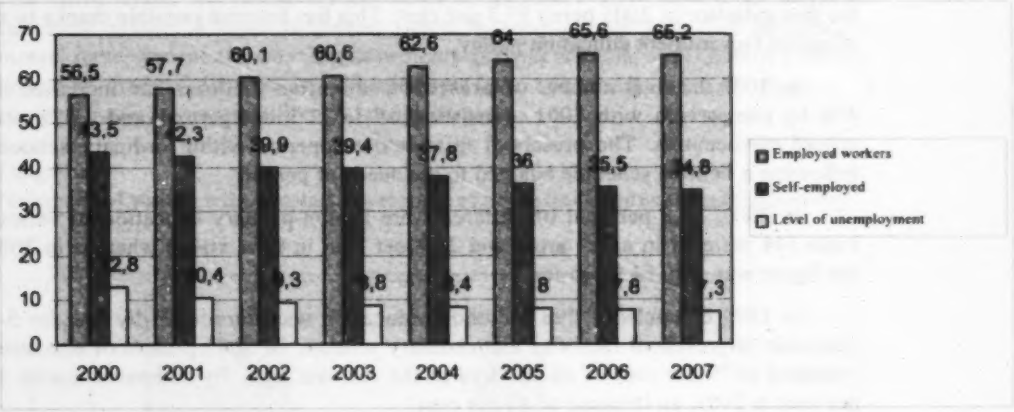
In recent years the gap has been somewhat reduced: in 2004 rural poverty rates were 3 times higher than those in cities,[1] at 24.8 per cent and 9.2 per cent respectively, whereas in 2006 rural poverty rates were 1.8 times in excess of urban rates, at 24.4 per cent against 13.6 per cent. This "flattening out" of rural and urban poverty is largely explained by the rise in migration from rural to urban areas. At the same time, migratory flows from village to city lead to an increase in urban poverty.

[1] Development goals in Kazakhstan on the threshold of the new millennium, 2005.

Poverty and employment

Thanks to the measures taken by the Government of Kazakhstan since 1999, there is now a steady increase in the numbers of employed people in the population, and a reduction in the level of unemployment. Employment stood at 7.6 million in 2007, an increase of 1.5 million (19.7 per cent) since 1999. One of the factors affecting the labour market is unemployment. Levels of unemployment have been falling year by year. In 2007 unemployment stood at 7.3 per cent, which was 6.2 percentage points lower than in 1999 (13.5 per cent). The unemployed population was 597,200 in 2007, a drop of 37.1 per cent over 8 years.

Diagram 2
Employment trends, 2000-2007



To solve the problem of unemployment in the Republic, and with a view to actively searching and selecting job opportunities (vacancies), a standard automated job placement system has been introduced in all regions. A plan for 2008-2010, consisting of measures to improve the job placement system, is now in effect. Implementation of these measures over the period 2008-2010 is expected to reduce unemployment to 6.9 per cent by the end of 2010.

Although the scale of youth unemployment (those aged 15-24) is still considerable, it is falling: from 14.3 per cent in 2004 to 9.4 per cent in 2007.

On the labour market there has been a reduction in the numbers of self-employed people in 2007 by comparison with 1999, which fell by 93,600, i.e. by 34.8 per cent. Self-employment is more frequent among women: in rural areas 57.5 per cent of women and 51.7 per cent of men are self-employed, whereas in cities the percentages are 21.6 per cent and 20.1 per cent.

The Government of Kazakhstan is working to raise the level of economic activity among women; at present it is 10 per cent lower than among men. Steps are also being taken to solve the problem of youth unemployment.

Achieving universal primary education

In Kazakhstan, in accordance with the law "On education" and the State programme for developing education in the Republic of Kazakhstan over the years 2005-2010, a set of measures announced in annual messages by the Head of State to the people of Kazakhstan is being pursued to develop the education system, make it accessible and improve the quality of education services.

Access to education

Primary education, as part of a system of continuing education, is the foundation stone of an individual's future development.

Kazakhstan has succeeded in providing a primary education for all children. In 2007, 99.6 per cent of primary school-age children were in education, the minimum for this indicator in 2005 being 99.3 per cent. This has become possible thanks to an effective Government education policy.

In 2007 the total number of **preschool education** facilities had increased by 450 by comparison with 2001, consisting of 1,617 kindergartens and 1,427 pre-school mini-centres. The preschool mini-centres operate within ordinary schools, following a flexible schedule adapted to the needs of parents.

In 2007, 32.8 per cent of children were in non-primary education of various kinds (44 per cent in urban areas and 20.1 per cent in rural areas) whereas in 2001 the figure was only 14.9 per cent.

In 1999 compulsory free preschool education was introduced by law for 5-6 year-olds in preschool facilities and ordinary schools. In 2007 preschool education extended to 79 per cent of all children of the relevant ages, by comparison with 31 per cent in 2001, an increase of 48 per cent.

Under article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, citizens are guaranteed free general education in State schools. General education is compulsory.

General education comprises three levels:

- Primary education — classes 1-4 (from ages 6-7);
- Basic secondary education — classes 5-9;
- General secondary education — classes 10-11.

In 2007, total pupil numbers in classes 1-4 were **938,100** (36.4 per cent of the total number of students), and in 2001, **1,141,655** (38.2 per cent).

Schools under strength (SUS)

Because of the special geographic and demographic characteristics of Kazakhstan — the huge area and low population density of the Republic — there are "schools under strength", that is, schools with a small number of pupils.

In 2007, 55.4 per cent of all general education schools were SUS schools, and 96.4 per cent of these schools were in rural areas. They were educating 16.2 per cent of all pupils, and 94.9 per cent of pupils in rural areas.

The pattern of evolution of the network of SUS schools shows that their number is increasing. From 2001 to 2007, the number went up by 177, and the number of pupils in them rose by 19,600.

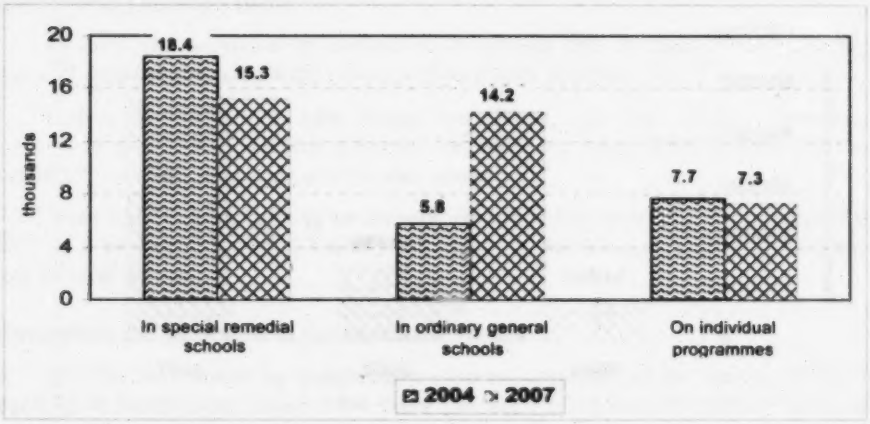
Thanks to the Government policy of securing the right of all children to education and access to education, these schools are fully functional in spite of the high cost of running them.

Schools for children with limited development potential

To ensure that education is accessible for children with limited development potential, **special remedial education facilities** have been set up.

In 2007, 14,500 children with developmental disabilities were being educated in special groupings of ordinary kindergartens, and 15,300 in 100 remedial schools. The Government has taken certain steps to introduce and develop an inclusive education system. **Fifteen thousand** pupils in need of help with their physical or mental development are studying in ordinary general schools, and **7,300** of them are in special classes (diagram 3). Arrangements have been made for 7,300 children to study at home following individual programmes.

Diagram 3
Numbers of pupils with limited development potential in education (thousands)



Education facilities for children and adolescents in need of special education

Children with deviant patterns of behaviour are educated in special schools. In 2007 there were 9 of these, catering for 724 pupils. There is a downward trend year by year in the numbers of these schools and the children in them.

Language of instruction

One of the indicators of wide access to education is the opportunity to choose the language of instruction. Education in the Republic is provided in 5 languages: Kazakh, Russian, Uyghur, Uzbek and Tajik.

In 2007, 47.6 per cent of all general schools were teaching in the Kazakh language, 22.9 per cent in Russian, 26.6 per cent in both Kazakh and Russian, and 1.1 per cent in other languages.

In locations where there is a sizeable population of specific ethnic groups, schools teach in the Uzbek, Uyghur and Tajik languages. Some 77.6 per cent of Uzbeks, 50.6 per cent of Tajiks and 35.6 per cent of Uyghurs are studying in their own languages.

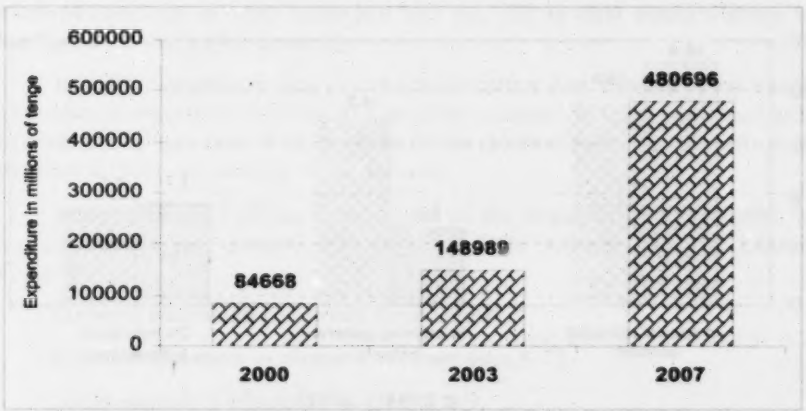
In 2007, teaching in 30 schools was in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English.

Financing the education system

To create the conditions in which accessible high-standard education is provided and expand the network of educational institutions and improve their facilities, the Government is implementing an effective policy to increase substantially, year by year, the funding available for the education system.

With the rise in the country's level of economic development, expenditure on education from the State budget has increased almost sixfold (diagram 4).

Diagram 4
Expenditure from the State budget on education, in millions of tenge



The proportion of GDP devoted to State spending on education in 2007 was 3.6 per cent, against 3.3 per cent in 2000. A considerable portion (60.5 per cent) of total budget expenditure on education is allocated to general education, with 4.5 per cent of total spending being allocated to preschool education.

In Kazakhstan there is also a steady growth in total expenditure per pupil at every level. In 2007 spending on each preschool pupil increased 3.6 times by comparison with 2000, and spending on each general education pupil 4.7 times.

Quality of education

The education development programme adopted in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2004 for the years 2005-2010 set out the basic guidelines for modernizing the education system in the country, improving education infrastructure and pedagogy,

introducing information technology into schools, improving the teaching force, and so forth. Improvements in the syllabus are designed to develop the motivation and ability of learners to obtain and use knowledge independently in practice, and to enable them through focused and systematic teaching to acquire scientific, effective learning tools.

In order to ensure that education is geared to developing in children the skills they need in life, a subject taught in primary schools is "Learning about the world". This is an integrated course, consisting of three units: nature, human beings, society. In studying this subject, primary pupils acquire a range of basic life skills to enable them to adapt successfully to conditions in modern society.

The year 2007 saw the completion of the special programme for preparing and publishing textbooks and new-generation educational materials for general schools in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Highly qualified teachers are essential in raising the quality of education. The proportion of primary teachers with higher education stood at 66 per cent in 2007, compared with 36.9 per cent in 2001.

Information technology in education

In 1997 a State programme was adopted to incorporate information technology into the general education system, so as to create a national IT network within the international education space.

In 2007 the provision of computers to schools had reached 1 computer for every 21 pupils, compared with 1 for every 62 pupils in 2001.

Online instruction is now being introduced into the teaching process, comprising a set of 5 subject schemas. In addition, since 2005 schools in the Republic have been acquiring multimedia resources.

Work has been proceeding to connect the education system to the Internet. By 2007 96.6 per cent of general schools had access to the Internet, including 93.5 per cent of rural schools.

Monitoring and appraisal in the education system

In order to conduct an independent external appraisal of the quality of pupil learning in Kazakhstan, since 2004 there has been a scheme of uniform national testing (UNT) of pupils leaving general schools, together with periodic State inspection (PSI) of standards achieved by pupils in classes 4 and 9. The UNT procedure covers at least 80 per cent of school-leavers each year. In 2005 10 per cent (in class 4) and 20 per cent (in class 9) of schools took part in the UNT procedure, and in 2008 the figure will be 50 per cent.

The findings of the PSI process for the attainment of pupils at class 4 level indicate a satisfactory level of learning achievement. On average, pupils leaving primary school have successfully mastered from 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the curriculum, depending on the subject. These results are also borne out by the findings of selective monitoring of the standard of educational attainment by class 4 pupils in mathematics, literacy and life skills, carried out by various voluntary and non-governmental organizations.

Participation in international monitoring studies

In order to be able to compare standards of educational attainment, it is necessary to take part in comparative international monitoring studies (TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS, etc.).

In 2007 Kazakhstan took part, for the first time, in an international comparative research study to evaluate mathematical and scientific literacy among pupils in class 4 (TIMSS-2007). A total of 4,271 class 4 pupils from 150 schools in all regions of the country took part. The findings of the study are expected to appear in July 2008.

In 2009 Kazakhstan will take part in the PISA-2009 international survey to evaluate educational attainment in reading, mathematics and science among 15 year-old pupils in general and vocational schools. In May 2008 a PISA-2009 appraisal was held in 50 schools in the Republic, involving 1,900 pupils.

In 2011 Kazakhstan is planning to conduct an international PIRLS comparative research study.

The findings of these international studies make it possible to compare results and conduct a comparative appraisal of the quality of education in the Republic against the corresponding indicators for other countries, so as to bring the education system up to date where necessary in the context of international developments and trends.

Attaining ecological sustainability

Kazakhstan is gradually solving the ecological problems involved in reducing levels of environmental pollution (over the years 2004-2007); stabilizing the environmental quality indicators and raising ecological standards for use of the environment (2008-2010); improving the quality of the environment and achieving a sound level of sustainable ecological development in society (2011-2015).

While gradually making the transition to sustainable natural resource use, over the period 2004-2006 Kazakhstan climbed from 75th to 70th place in the international rating scale for ecological sustainability. The Republic's plan for transition to sustainable development (2007-2024) sets a goal for further improving the index of ecological sustainability (by 10 per cent in 2012, by 15 per cent in 2018 and by 25 per cent in 2024) on the basis of the targets formulated.

In the light of the above, measures have been developed for making the transition to up-to-date models for the consumption and use of natural resources in a careful manner which reduces the environmental burden and sets limits on the depletion of resources.

In Kazakhstan over 60 per cent of the ecosystems are subject to the processes of desertification, especially in the desert and steppe zone, where land is ploughed and over-grazed. About 75 per cent of the territory of the country is at high risk of ecological destabilization. Moreover, there is considerably less spare land, such as water ecosystems with low levels of anthropogenic impact, than in developed countries. The Caspian Sea and the coastal areas are heavily impacted by man-made factors (flooding of oil-wells, pollution of the sea by river waters, implantation of exogenous species, accidents at oil extraction sites). As part of the implementation

of the regional Convention on the preservation of the marine environment [the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea], draft protocols are being prepared on regional cooperation in combating oil pollution, protecting biodiversity, conducting EIAs in a transboundary context and steadily developing coastal areas while preserving and making rational use of bioresources.

The State allocates considerable resources to the regions with an unfavourable ecological environment, with a view to finding appropriate solutions to their development problems.

Special attention is being focused on the Aral sea. To stabilize the situation in the Aral sea region, the Central Asian countries have devised a regional plan of action, a comprehensive programme for the Aral sea basin and a regional convention to protect the environment of Central Asia. These instruments are designed to tackle the issues involved in transboundary management of the water and land resources and of waste, and in preserving biodiversity.

A programme is in effect to tackle the various problems of the Aral sea region over the period 2007-2009, along with the Syrdarya river control and northern Aral sea project for 2001-2009, financed by the Government of Kazakhstan and the World Bank. Following the construction through this project of the Kok-Aral Dam, completed in August 2005, the water level in the northern Aral sea has risen by three metres, resulting in reduced salinity of the water and a considerable increase in the variety and numbers of marketable freshwater fish, which in turn has revived fishing in the Aral sea.

Since 1997, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly of the United Nations has unanimously adopted the resolution "International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan". This resolution has drawn the attention of the international community to this problem, and considerable assistance for the rehabilitation of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site is being provided by Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, USAID and UNDP, together with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNV and so forth.

To improve the ecological, economic and medico-social factors which affect the quality of life in the Semipalatinsk region, a State programme has been in effect over the period 2005-2007 to tackle the problems of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site during this period. A new programme cycle for the period 2009-2011 will shortly begin. As a result the quality of life in the region (drinking water supplies, social protection and compensation, employment) has improved.

Biodiversity

Work is being done in the Republic to preserve and reproduce water, forest and fishery resources, plants and animals. There are nature reserves of national and international repute in which only limited economic use is permitted, and a register of sites of ground deposits of special ecological, scientific, cultural and other significance, listed as specially protected national territories (SPNT). A database of forestry and fishing areas, SPNT lands, animals and plants has been created by using GPS technology.

The areas comprising nature reserves and national parks amount to 4.4 per cent of the territory of the Republic, a figure which will be more than doubled to reflect

the targets for sustainable development (4.4 per cent by 2005, 5 per cent by 2009, 8 per cent by 2012, 9 per cent by 2018 and 10 per cent by 2024).

Table 1
Categories, numbers and extent of SPNTs

Categories of SPNTs	*Number of sites*	*Area in thousands of hectares*
Nature sanctuaries	10	1 223.0
National parks	9	1 653.2
Forestry reserves	2	940.2
Nature reserves	50	5 998.4
Protected areas	5	11 350.5
Sites of special natural beauty	26	6.6
Botanic gardens	5	0.4
Total	**107**	**21 172.3**

There are also plans for a 13 per cent increase in the national biodiversity register through an expansion in the areas and number of specially protected natural territories, through the sustainable use of species, populations and ecosystems and through measures to preserve them. Rare endemic and surviving species in need of preservation include more than 400 plant varieties and 300 types of vertebrates. In spite of the measures already taken, the proportion of birds, amphibians and mammals at risk of extinction is on the increase.

Forests

Forested areas in the Republic cover 26,770.5 hectares. Land under forest cover occupies 12,303.4 hectares, representing 46 per cent of the total forested area, or 4.6 per cent of the entire territory of the Republic.

Table 2
Basic indicators of forest land

Years	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*
Total area of forest land, millions of hectares	26.1	26.2	26.5	26.5	26.8	27.8
Land under forest cover, millions of hectares	11.7	12.4	12.4	12.3	12.3	12.3
Total planted area of timber, millions of cubic metres	373.6	375.8	375.8	375.8	375.8	375.8
Percentage of national territory under forest	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5

Source: Summary statistical yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2007.

The average annual growth in the total area of forest is 0.5 per cent. The deforested area is considerably greater (42,400 hectares in 2006). There is a significant discrepancy between the extent of forest timber cut down and the

reforested areas. The situation is aggravated by the increasing number of forest fires.

Steps are being taken, in line with Government programmes, to stabilize the forest holdings of the Republic, as shown by the fact that the area of forest cover has altered only slightly over the past 10 years.

Land resources. The land area of Kazakhstan is 272.5 million hectares, 32.6 per cent of which is agricultural land. About 75 per cent of the national territory is at high risk of ecological destabilization (30 million hectares from sand and over 93 million hectares from excessive salinity). Rates of degradation are on the increase, with the dehumidification of soils on irrigated land (0.7 million hectares). Of 182.8 million hectares of pasture land, 26.6 million hectares are experiencing a high degree of desertification; and 169,700 hectares of land have undergone a change of use in the course of building works, the processing of extracted substances or geological exploration.

To slow down the pace of desertification, plans are being made to develop schemes of land management, including the regeneration of degraded soils and the restoration and improvement of irrigated land.

Water resources

Most of the country's major rivers rise outside its borders, making it dependent on the contiguous States. Kazakhstan's portion of these water resources amounts to 37,000 cubic metres per square kilometre, or 6,000 cubic metres per person per year; 95.2 per cent of the urban population and 57.2 per cent of the rural population have access to drinking water. By the end of 2010 it is planned to provide 77.2 per cent of the rural population with sustainable sources of drinking water of guaranteed quality and in the necessary amounts. Work is in progress to build and reconstruct water supply systems. The availability of fresh water (1,000 cubic metres per inhabitant) is significantly below international standards.

Table 3
Access to drinking water and sanitation as of 1 January 2007

	Numbers		*Access to drinking water*		*Access to plumbing*	
Population	*People*	*%*	*People*	*%*	*People*	*%*
In towns	7 867 170	51.5	7 485 683	95.2	5 050 022	64.2
In the countryside	7 396 739	48.5	4 234 258	57.2		
Total for the Republic	**15 263 909**	**100.0**	**11 719 941**	**76.8**		

Source: Documents from the Programme for achieving the MDGs for water and sanitation in the Republic of Kazakhstan to 2015.

As part of the measures to implement the Plan for developing the water sector of the economy to 2010, a system is being devised for making the transition to integral management of water resources on the reservoir principle, which reduces the strain on water ecosystems.

Greenhouse gases

The main sources of greenhouse gases in Kazakhstan are the energy sector, automobile transport and agriculture. In 2005 total emissions of gases with a direct greenhouse effect in the Republic were 240.7 million tonnes of carbon equivalent. Part of the emissions (5.9 million tonnes) were reabsorbed by forests and farmed land.[2]

Table 4
Emissions of gases with a direct greenhouse effect, millions of tons of $C0_2$ equivalent

Sources (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)	*1990*	*1992*	*1994*	*2000*	*2005*
Carbon dioxide	238.3	261.2	243.7	137.3	186.3
Hydrocarbons	64.0	57.8	46.3	33.9	42.7
Nitrogen oxide	27.0	25.1	17.6	9.0	11.7
Total emissions	**329.3**	**344.1**	**307.6**	**180.2**	**240.7**
Net emissions (sources minus absorption)	**321.2**	**336.9**	**302.7**	**173.1**	**234.8**

Source: Information bulletin on the state of the environment in the Republic of Kazakhstan, No. 1(87), 2007. Ministry of the Environment.

Consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODS)

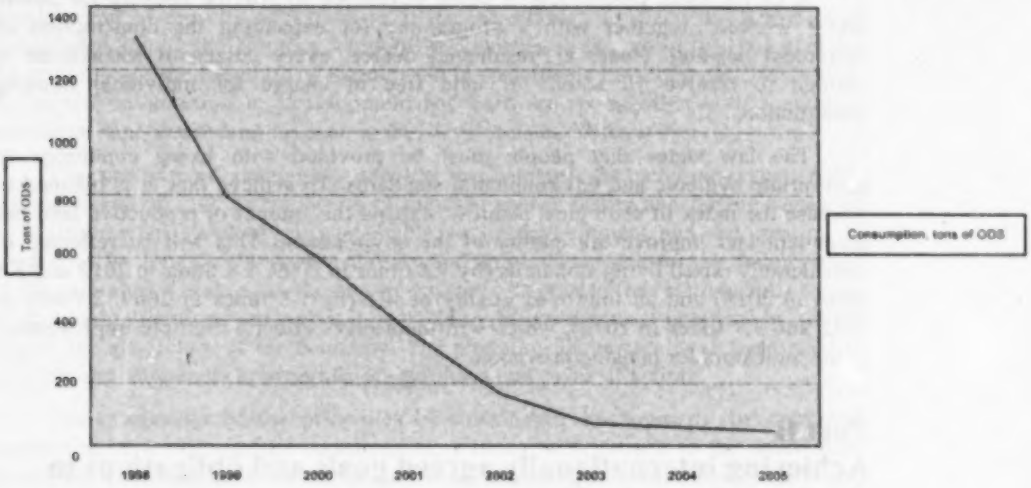
Kazakhstan is one of the 191 countries which have ratified the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Republic does not produce ozone-depleting substances, but it does import them in the form of refrigeration units, aerosols, fire extinguishers and construction foam. The ozone layer above Kazakhstan is diminishing in thickness in the winter and spring by 7 per cent, and in the autumn by 8 per cent.

To limit the use of ozone-depleting substances, a licensing system has been introduced for the import and export of ODS, with a ban on customs authorities allowing in certain controlled substances. New equipment has been installed in enterprises which previously used ODS in their technical processes. Recycling facilities have been provided for ODS. An information system on ODS has been introduced to process and analyse data on the volumes consumed, imported and exported. The rules for issuing permits for the import and export of ODS and products containing them have been tightened up, and also those governing production involving ODS and the repair, maintenance and servicing of equipment containing ODS.

As a result of the measures adopted, the volume of ODS consumption has fallen below one tenth of the previous figure (from 597,000 tons in 2000 to 46,000 tons in 2005).

[2] Information bulletin on the state of the environment in the Republic of Kazakhstan, No. 1(87), 2007. Ministry of the Environment.

Diagram 5
Trends in total consumption of ODS, tons



Improving living conditions

A key aim in Kazakhstan is to bring about a considerable improvement in living standards by 2020 for those among the rural population who are living in especially poor social, housing and environmental conditions. In the past 10 years there has been a significant increase in the average supply of housing. Homes in cities have been built at an especially rapid pace. The volume of investment in house construction in Kazakhstan in one year alone (2007) went up by 60 per cent.[3]

Table 5
Basic indicators of living standards

Years	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
Average housing supply in square metres of total living space per inhabitant, including:	16.6	17.0	17.3	17.5	17.6	17.9
Urban areas	17.3	18.0	18.4	18.7	18.9	19.4
Rural areas	15.6	15.8	15.9	16.0	15.9	16.2
Standard of housing stock by % of homes equipped with:						
A domestic water supply	52.4	52.8	53.5	54.4	54.9	56.3
Plumbing	43.1	43.3	43.7	44.6	54.0	45.6

Source: Summary statistical yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2007.

[3] Summary statistical yearbook of Kazakhstan, 2007.

The Republic has 20 centres for the social rehabilitation of persons without any fixed place of abode. New centres are being provided to help these persons to adapt and integrate to society, working to solve their housing problems through social tenancies and the provision of individual housing.[4]

A Government programme is being developed to provide housing for public sector workers, together with a programme for expanding the construction of individual housing. Under a Presidential decree, every citizen of Kazakhstan is entitled to receive 10 sotoks of land free of charge for individual housing construction.

The law states that people must be provided with living conditions to appropriate hygienic and environmental standards. To achieve this, it is planned to increase the index of ecological stability, expand the amount of productive land per inhabitant and improve the quality of the environment. This will be reflected in considerably raised living standards (by 1.4 times in 2009, 1.8 times in 2012 and 3.4 times in 2018) and an improved quality of life (by 1.5 times in 2009, 2 times in 2012 and 3.7 times in 2018), which will themselves effect a multiple improvement in the indicators for housing provision.

Part B
Achieving internationally agreed goals and obligations in the field of sustainable development

Supporting sustainability in national policymaking; introducing the principles of sustainable development into the economic, social and political spheres

The Republic of Kazakhstan, as a full member of the international community, has assumed obligations for achieving the targets set in Agenda 21 (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the declarations of the Millennium Summit (New York, 2000), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) and the World Summit (New York, 2005).

Kazakhstan plays an active part in the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the regional Eurasian network of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the processes of "Environment for Europe" and "Environment and Sustainable Development for Asia". Programmes are successfully being implemented under the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFSAS) and the Caspian Environment Programme. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia is in Kazakhstan.

The Republic of Kazakhstan has ratified 24 conventions on conservation of natural resources. Under these conventions, Kazakhstan is cooperating with the Global Environment Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and others.

[4] Report by Prime Minister K. Masimov "On the government programme for 2007-2009" at the joint session of Parliament, 2007.

The Government of Kazakhstan has adopted and is in course of implementing a number of key instruments: the development strategy for Kazakhstan to the year 2030; the strategic development plan for the Republic of Kazakhstan to 2010; the strategy for industrial innovation to the year 2015; the plan for ecological security in the Republic of Kazakhstan to the year 2015; the strategy for the sustainable development of the city of Astana to 2010; the strategy to place the Republic of Kazakhstan among the 50 most competitive countries in the world; and the plan for the transition of the Republic of Kazakhstan to sustainable development, 2007-2024. A Council on Sustainable Development has been set up, together with a national petroleum fund and a fund for sustainable development, "Kazin".

The programme documents include mechanisms for achieving sustainable economic growth; and principles of sustainable energy policy and for the transition to environmental standards of sustainable social development and the creation of conditions for long-term business activity and employment and for the development of the capital of Kazakhstan, the city of Astana. The country has introduced a model of economic growth which makes it possible to preserve natural potential by setting targets for all sectors of the economy. The planning documents have been used to develop and implement appropriate programmes and plans of action.

The integration of the principles of sustainable development (inter-sectoral partnership and inter-agency coordination, a balanced approach to the solution of economic, environmental and social problems, changing patterns of production and consumption) is coordinated by the Council on Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic with the participation of representatives of State bodies, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, business and international organizations.

The chief priority directions of policy in our country are the transition to sustainable development, improving the quality of life for the people and developing human capital. There are plans to reduce the level of environmental pollution, establish management systems for industrial and domestic waste, devise a mechanism for stimulating the rational use of natural resources, introduce a system of ecological management and international environmental standards at industrial plants, raise the index of ecological stability and sustainability to that of the 50 internationally competitive countries, solve the problems of sustainable water use and renewable energy, and involve leading business people in the process of sustainable development.

The country possesses all the resources needed to achieve sustainable development, in terms of natural resources and manpower, intellectual, industrial and financial strength, and so forth. In pursuing this aim, the Government of Kazakhstan intends to seek synergy through greater reliance on inter-sectoral partnership and inter-agency coordination.

Initiatives to achieve internationally agreed goals and obligations in the field of sustainable development

The following have been held in Kazakhstan:

– The International Ministerial Conference on "The strategic role of renewable energies in sustainable development in Central Asia" held under the auspices

of UNESCO and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IESCO) on 17-19 May 2006 in Almaty;

- The third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, 28-30 June, Almaty;
- The international forum on the Balkhash-Alakol basin, March 2007, Almaty;
- An international business forum on sustainable development and corporate responsibility, 28 March 2007 in Astana;
- An international forum on fuel-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, 16 April 2007, Almaty;
- The first business forum on the problems of sustainable development;
- The third Presidential Council for Foreign Investors (2007), dealing with the problems of adhering to environmental standards in the business sphere;
- The first Eurasian forum on sustainable development (3 June 2008 in Astana).

At the Environment Ministers conference in Belgrade in 2007, Kazakhstan proposed the integration of the European and Asian programmes into a Eurasian programme for sustainable development, and the holding of a conference in Astana in 2011 for the 55 countries of Europe, Central America and CIS participating in the "Environment for Europe" process.

Risks and challenges

For MDG 1

- Fulfilling the goal for reducing the level of poverty may be made more difficult by the change in the approach to defining the subsistence minimum, by insufficient rates of income growth among the poorest members of the population and by the high level of inflation.
- Although some progress has been achieved in reducing poverty in the Republic, there is a risk that some of the population may be classed as poor because their incomes are insufficient for a decent standard of living. This means that certain problems must be tackled in the very near future in order to raise living standards for excluded groups in the population.
- Rates of rural poverty are still high, especially among mothers of families with numerous children and among young people. Given the high incidence of migration from rural regions to the towns, there is a risk of increased urban poverty.

For MDG 2

- The quality of education at all levels must be improved through the rational placement of educational facilities in the light of the demographic and migratory factors.
- A transition is needed to a new curriculum based on a skills approach, and new textbooks will be needed for the new syllabuses.
- State spending on education must be increased up to the level of developed countries (5-6 per cent of GDP), and this will make it possible to increase

teachers' salaries substantially and to improve the physical facilities in schools.

For MDG 7

– The lack of any estimate of value of the country's natural resource capital makes it necessary to undertake the tasks involved in establishing a register of natural resources, including technogenic resources (industrial and historic waste).

– The task of providing clean drinking water and improved sewage is complicated by the high proportion of the population (44 per cent) living in rural areas. To achieve the goals set, it will be necessary to continue with the policy of improving living standards in the countryside.

– Among the cardinal principles of sustainability is the ecosystem approach, calling for the introduction of a number of restrictions, rules and regulations in the conduct of economic activity, as a means of attaining ecologically permissible use thresholds for natural resources and ensuring the properly balanced management of environmental quality. A major problem is the failure to take sufficient account of the ecosystem approach when implementing development programmes.

Recommendations for achieving sustainable development

- Incorporate the principles and indicators of sustainable development into the processes of strategic planning of the development of the national economy;
- Improve the system for managing natural resource use and protecting the environment, overcoming inter-agency barriers and strengthening inter-sectoral partnership;
- Achieve synergy through interaction among the social, economic, ecological and institutional divisions of the public service sector;
- Establish transboundary sustainable development zones to solve regional environmental problems;
- Harmonize Kazakhstan's nature conservation laws with international norms and standards;
- Create a modern infrastructure based on the use of environmentally clean technologies;
- Support research into the preservation of the country's ecosystems and natural resource potential;
- Increase funding for the education system to ensure its sustainable development, up to the level of 5-6 per cent of GDP recommended by UNESCO;
- Implement measures to raise the quality of education while retaining its widely accessible character;
- Strengthen inter-agency coordination and inter-sectoral cooperation, and ensure that all inter-agency structures (commissions, councils, working groups,

etc.) include representatives of NGOs and of women's, farmers', trade union, youth, scientific and business organizations and associations;

- Strengthen international partnership, including with United Nations structures, so as to achieve sustainable development at the regional and global levels.

Partnership for development

Donor assistance began to flow into Kazakhstan following independence in 1992. At that time the country's economic and social structures were undergoing a major transformation, which in combination with the pressing need to carry out major economic reforms pushed the country's development into decline.

Limited resources in this period brought about the need for outside assistance in order to continue on the path of reform and effect the necessary structural changes.

The integration of Kazakhstan into the international community has provided the opportunity for obtaining concessionary loans and export credits and grants.

The official development assistance received by Kazakhstan during this period was mainly used to support the balance of payments and to finance the purchase of vital import goods.

Grants from international and foreign donor organizations, including the United Nations, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, USAID, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan were used to support national efforts in the field of legislative reform, to protect the environment, to reform the financial sector, for privatization and the restructuring of major enterprises, to develop private sector business and to support the social sector.

In order to stabilize the macroeconomic situation, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan has moved the emphasis of foreign assistance away from direct budget support and the creation of institutional potential, and towards the development of social and physical infrastructure and the mobilization of investment in the real economy.

There are presently 151 organizations in the Republic with international status, including 48 international organizations, 28 State organizations and 75 foreign non-governmental voluntary organizations and foundations.

Almost all the international development agencies and organizations, in one way or another, dispense grant monies to develop the sectors associated with the Millennium Development Goals. EU/TACIS and USAID contribute to some extent to developing and implementing projects in the field of social assistance, poverty reduction and boosting employment. Considerable assistance in achieving the MDGs comes from the specialized agencies of the United Nations in Kazakhstan (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM and so forth).

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the Republic of Kazakhstan has come a long way on the path to sustainable development. The country has achieved some of the agreed development goals. The task now is to consolidate these achievements and take the solution of existing problems to a qualitatively new level, with more ambitious goals and targets within the current agenda for MDG-Plus. Specifically, MDG-Plus will be taken into account in developing the new

United Nations development assistance programme (UNDAF) for the period 2010 to 2015, which will determine the framework for cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United Nations. The Government of the Republic is weighing up the possibility of joint implementation of projects, including co-financing for the projects.

In strengthening cooperation with the United Nations, it will be necessary to pay greater attention to national priorities under current conditions. The framework programme, which is really a "road map", must become an effective instrument for greater interaction and cooperation in development matters between Kazakhstan and the United Nations.

In particular, when carrying out joint projects it will be necessary to pay special attention to the issues involved in reducing poverty and unemployment, maternal and child mortality, ensuring sustainable development, including improving the environment, combating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, promoting gender equality and democratic governance, protecting the rights of excluded groups in the population, eliminating ecological impacts in the region of the Semipalatinsk site and the Aral sea, preventing risks on the Caspian sea and Lake Balkhash, and so forth.

The country's record of economic growth over the last few years has resulted in a significant reduction in volumes of official development assistance (ODA). Today, however, it is extremely important for the Government of the Republic to consolidate on the institutional level the achievements of the past few years in the area of development. In this respect, technical and consultancy assistance on the part of the international community, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in solving development problems is of great importance.

Annex

The Millennium Development Goals and the national goals and targets

MDG		*Kazakhstan*			
Goals	*Targets*	*Goals*	*Normative documents*	*Targets*	*Normative documents*
Goal 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger	**Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day**	Health, education and welfare for the people of Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan — 2030, Long-term priority 4	Reduce by 20-25% the proportion of the population with an income less than the subsistence level by 2005	Government programme (2002-2004)
		Ensure growth in real incomes of the people Introduce a system of social insurance	Kazakhstan — 2010, Strategy for ensuring employment and social protection	Over the period from 2002 to 2005, reduce by 30% the proportion of people with an income below the subsistence minimum	Project under the State poverty reduction programme (2003-2005)
		Find jobs for the socially excluded population groups		By 2005 reduce by 18% the proportion of people with an income below the subsistence minimum	
	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	Improve nutrition Improve the welfare of the rural population, raising productivity and the profitability of agrarian production	Kazakhstan — 2030, Long-term priority 4 Kazakhstan — 2010, Agro-industrial policy	Improving the health of children through rational high-quality nutrition Achieve food security for Kazakhstan High-quality rational nutrition for the population	State programme "The health of the people" (1998-2008) State agricultural production programme (2003-2005) Comprehensive programme "A healthy lifestyle" (1999-2010)
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	**Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling**	Achieve high-quality education at all levels Guarantee the constitutional right of citizens to a full secondary education, and	Kazakhstan — 2010, Strategy for reforming education State programme for education (2000-2005)	By 2010 all children of school age, including those in need of special education, must be receiving a quality secondary education	Development strategy for Kazakhstan to 2030 Long-term priority 4

MDG		*Kazakhstan*			
Goals	*Targets*	*Goals*	*Normative documents*	*Targets*	*Normative documents*
		improve its quality			
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	**Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, and reverse the loss of environmental resources**	Reduce the number of items of equipment which pollute the environment and cause ecological damage	Kazakhstan — 2030, Long-term priority 4		
	Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	Water consumption and proper nutrition Improve environmental monitoring and the status of water sources Provide the people with quality drinking water	Kazakhstan — 2030, Long-term priority 4 Kazakhstan — 2010, Strategy for health reform National programme "Drinking water" (2002-2010)	By 2005 reduce the proportion of people without regular access to drinking water from 15% to 6% in towns and from 29% to 15% in rural areas	Project under the State poverty reduction programme (2003-2005)
	Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers	Health, education and welfare for the citizens of Kazakhstan Improving the welfare of the rural population	Kazakhstan — 2030, Long-term priority 4 Kazakhstan — 2010, Agro-industrial policy	Solve the housing problems of a large number of people	Programme for the long-term funding of housing construction and the development of mortgage lending (2000-2003)

Source: United Nations development goals in Kazakhstan on the threshold of the new millennium, 2002.

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